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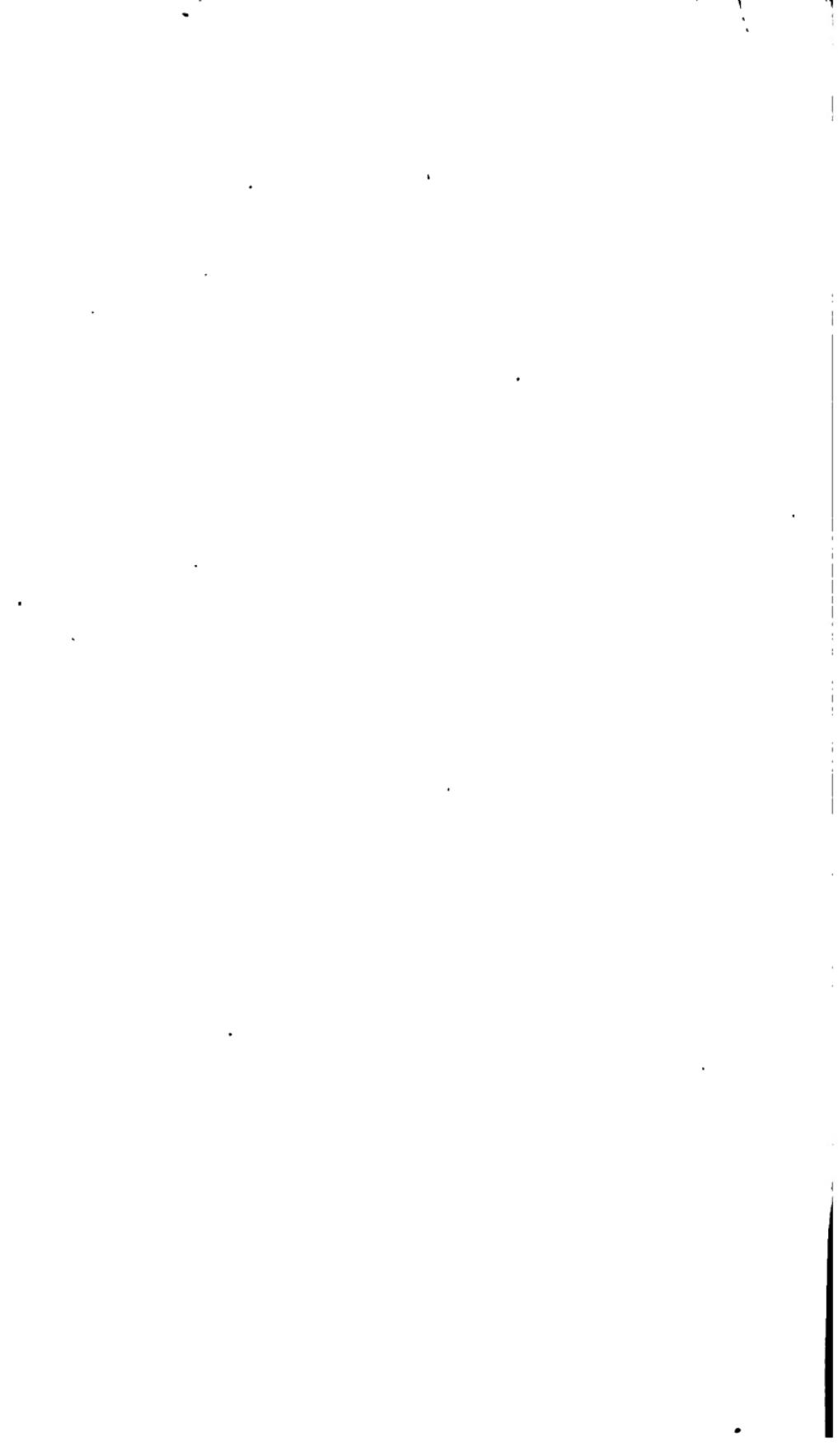


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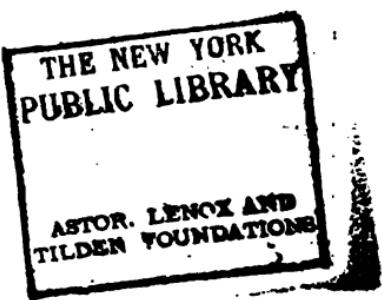
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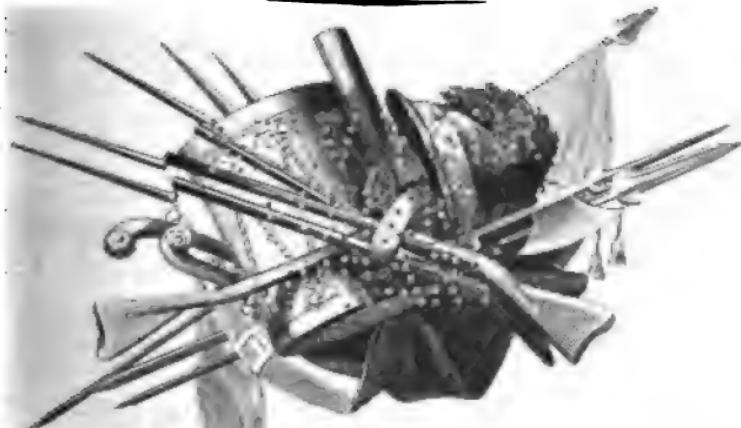
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commencing in 1775 and ending in 1783

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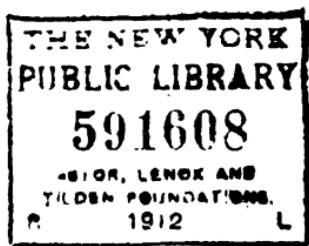
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H I S T O R Y

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C H A P. LII.

Aimed Neutrality.—Conduct of Holland.—Successes of Admiral Rodney.

1790.

WHILE the foregoing transactions were taking place in America, a new and unexpected scene was preparing in Europe, which marked in a peculiar manner the opening of the ensuing year.

The jealousy entertained by the maritime powers in Europe, of the power and pre-eminence exercised by Great Britain at sea, had operated hitherto but covertly; and, indirectly. Expecting that the union of the House of Bourbon would have proved sufficient to check it effectually, they had remained passive spectators of a contest, which they imagined would not fail to terminate to the disadvantage of this country. So great and potent a combination as that of America, France, and Spain, seemed to promise, without any additional aid, to bring the maritime strength of Britain to that state of diminution, which was the general will and aim of European politics.

But when it was found that the spirit and exertions of Britain were such, as afforded little hope that even this mighty confederacy would succeed in compassing this long desired object, a determination was taken by all the remaining powers to form a naval combination in order to effect it.

Pretences for a measure of this kind were not wanting. The activity and number of British privateers, had rendered them universal objects of terror, not only to the commercial shipping of their enemies, but to the many vessels belonging to other powers, that were employed in furnishing them with such articles as were not consistent with a strict and fair neutrality. Goods coming under this description in the plainest and most uncontrovertible manner, were often made, nevertheless, a subject of litigation, and the letter of treaties was wrested, in order to put a wrong interpretation upon them, in evident contradiction of the spirit by which they were dictated.

As the British ministry insisted, on the other hand, upon the propriety and lawfulness of seizing articles of this nature, contentions arose between Great Britain and the various powers to which the vessels laden with such articles belonged. The right of preventing supplies from being carried to the enemy was so manifest, that nothing but an inclination to make use of any opportunity to quarrel with this nation, could have prompted that eagerness with which all Europe seemed to conspire in refusing to admit the validity of the arguments upon which the conduct of the British government was founded.

The principles alledged in its defence were derived from ancient and long received practice.— They had for ages constituted that part of the law of nations which relates to the usages established in civilized countries in times of war. They formed

so powerful a barrier to the designs in agitation against Great Britain, that while their validity was allowed, no just complaint could be framed against the conduct of the British ministry.

The only method remaining therefore to arraign it, was to call in question the rectitude of those principles, and to establish a new system of maritime laws, contrary to those which had been so long in force. By these means the pretences of Britain would be overthrown, and the right she claimed of intercepting the supplies carried to her enemies, would be entirely annulled.

That power which took the lead in the promulgation of this new system was Russia; one that ought, according to all the rules of what seemed just policy, to have acted a friendly part to Britain, and discountenanced a measure which tended so manifestly to detriment her in a material degree.

It was under the protection of ancient maxims, and customs, that Britain maintained the arduous conflict against so many powerful enemies with no small success. It was for that reason alone that Europe determined they should undergo a total alteration.

Whatever might be the secret motives for so extraordinary a determination in the Court of Russia, it was with just surprize the Court of Great Britain received notice that it had formed a code of naval regulations, which militated in the direc^test manner against the practices hitherto observed in Europe, and were evidently levelled at the maritime power of this country.

It was a matter of peculiar astonishment that Russia should be at the head of a combination so injurious to Great Britain. The favours she had received from the British ministry, in her late war with the Turks, and still more the commercial benefits resulting from a connection with this country,

seemed to secure the good will of Russia, and even its assistance, in case of necessity. Little therefore was it expected that it should prove the first of all European potentates in that inimical declaration, the intent of which was to deprive Great Britain of the principal resources that enabled her to stand her ground in the midst of so many difficulties.

The purport of this celebrated declaration was, that the navigation of neutral powers should remain as free and unobstructed in time of war, as in that of peace; and that provided their ships were not laden with contraband goods, they should enjoy the liberty of conveying, free of seizure and restraint, all other articles whatever, though belonging to the subjects of the powers at war.

This declaration, so contradictory to the ideas and practice that had hitherto prevailed, was received with much apparent submission and deference by the Courts of France and Spain, of which it strongly forwarded the views. Great Britain, contrary to her custom and character, was obliged to temporise on this trying occasion. Her answer to this mortifying declaration, though guardedly expressed, was not wanting in terms sufficiently clear to remind Russia how different a part Great Britain had acted to her in the day of need.

In taking a step of so unprecedented a nature, Russia had previously used the precaution of securing the concurrence of all her neighbours. So formidable was the impression of the power and spirit of Britain, notwithstanding the perils that surrounded her, that none of the northern powers durst presume, alone and unsupported by the others, to enter the lists against Britain in so hostile and decisive a manner.

Denmark and Sweden joined accordingly with Russia in this naval confederacy; to which Holland, and even Portugal itself, were invited to accede. So prevalent,

valent, and so powerful was the universal malevolence to Britain, and so unquestionably was it reputed the interest of Europe to co-operate in the humiliation of her maritime grandeur. In this manner was formed that universal association of the neutral powers in Europe against Great Britain, which assumed the denomination of "Armed Neutrality."

Of all those states whose conduct was inimical to Britain during the contest with America, none afforded juster cause of resentment than that of Holland. Since the commencement of that unhappy quarrel, a clandestine commerce had been carried on between the Dutch and the Americans, highly prejudicial to the affairs of Great Britain. The encouragement given to the revolted Colonies was open and manifest. They were not only furnished with all manner of supplies, but undisguised countenance and respect were shewn to their flag, in a manner incompatible with the honour and dignity of Great Britain.

Representations had frequently been made to the States General of this impropriety of conduct in their subjects, by the British Ambassador at the Hague, Sir Joseph Yorke, who complained in a memorial presented in the month of February, seventy-seven, of the disregard shewn to several antecedent remonstrances, and insisted on a behaviour in future more satisfactory to the Court of Britain, insinuating, that in case of non-compliance, due resentment would be shewn.

Though a respectful answer was returned to this remonstrance, the correspondence still continued between the Dutch and the Americans on the same footing as before.

On the rupture with France, this unfriendly disposition towards Great Britain on the part of Holland was exhibited more openly, and exerted with a higher hand than ever. The dock-yards of France

were supplied with all kind of materials for the construction and equipment of fleets, with as much readiness and affiduity, as if France and Holland had formed the closest alliance against Britain.

Though incensed at such unprovoked usage, Britain went no further than to seize those Dutch vessels that were loaded with naval stores for the French ports. The States of Holland pleaded the letter of a treaty made a century ago ; but they were given to understand that nothing could be more ungenerous and unjust than to insist on the fulfilling of a treaty which the circumstances of the present time rendered inadmissible. Britain could not permit Holland to supply France with naval stores, without exposing herself to imminent danger. There were a numberless variety of other articles in trade, from the importation of which into France the Dutch might derive immense profits, without furnishing that power with the means of injuring Great Britain.

In order to take away all pretences of complaint from the Dutch, the British government, instead of making prizes of the vessels laden with these hostile cargoes, came to the generous determination to purchase at a fair valuation, all the naval stores that were on board the Dutch vessels brought into the ports of Great Britain, to pay the freight of the cargoes, and to indemnify the proprietors in all the just expences and damages occasioned by the detention of their vessels.

While the Court of Great Britain was repeatedly complaining of the obstinacy with which the Dutch merchants continued to furnish the French with naval stores, these, on the other hand, presented a memorial to the States, remonstrating against the seizure of their vessels employed in that business, and requiring protection for their prosecuting it in safety.

France,

France, in the mean time, conscious of the necessity of procuring this resource to her marine, insisted peremptorily on its being protected by the States, in the same manner as every other branch of the Dutch trade. So strenuous was the French ministry in asserting the propriety of this measure, that it threatened to consider a relaxation of the demands made upon Great Britain by Holland, as an infraction of the neutrality which Holland was bound to observe between France and Great Britain, and as an evident proof of partiality to the latter. The French Ambassador presented a memorial to the States on this subject, urging them in the most pressing manner, to an effectual and speedy compliance with the requisition of his Court.

In order to encourage the importation of naval stores a regulation was issued in France in the month of July seventy-eight, by which such various advantages were granted to neutral vessels as accorded with the views of being supplied through their means with the necessaries for her navy. But on the States not complying with the requisition of the French ministry in the manner it had proposed, these advantages were revoked with respect to the subjects of Holland ; the city of Amsterdam alone excepted ; which had warmly espoused the cause of France, and demanded of the States the equipment of a squadron for the protection of its navigation to that kingdom, against the British cruisers.

Notwithstanding the authority assumed by the Court of France, in prescribing to the Dutch in what manner they should observe their treaties with Great Britain, the French faction in Holland was so powerful, that instead of resenting this freedom, it was represented as justifiable and well founded. Clamours in the mean time encreased against the British government ; and it was described as aiming

at an exclusive right of framing laws for the commercial correspondence between different states.

On the accession of Spain to the confederacy against Great Britain, fresh representations were made to the States, on the necessity of prohibiting the exportation of naval stores to her enemies; but they had no more effect than the former: the difficulties wherein Britain was involved, seemed, on the contrary, to have infused into the people of Holland a stronger desire to add to the distresses of the British nation.

A formal demand was now made upon Holland on the part of Great Britain, for the succours stipulated by the treaties subsisting between them. The dangers that menaced both states from the family compact of the House of Bourbon, were laid before the Dutch in their strongest colours. But whatever might be the real cause of their averseness, to listen to the representations from the Court of Great Britain, whether they were intimidated by the vast power displayed by its numerous enemies, or influenced by an invincible jealousy, they still continued in the same unfriendly disposition. No answer was given to the memorial; and all appearances tended to prove a fixed determination to act an inimical part towards Great Britain.

In the beginning of the year eighty, a fleet of merchantmen laden with naval stores for the French navy, sailed from Holland under the convoy of a squadron of men-of-war. Intelligence of this being brought to England, a squadron was dispatched under Commodore Fielding, to intercept them. On meeting the Dutch fleet, he requested permission to search them as usual; but this was denied, contrary to the right of treaty. Hereupon he sent his boats with orders to insist upon the examination of the cargoes; but they were fired upon by the Dutch commander, Count Byland, and prevented from executing

ecuting those orders. Commodore Fielding upon this, fired a shot a-head of the Dutch Admiral, who returned it with a broadside ; Captain Fielding replied with another, and the former struck his colours. In the mean time most of the Dutch vessels laden with naval stores, had found means to escape. They proceeded on their voyage, and arrived safe in the French ports ; where they brought naval supplies in abundance, and which at that time were very much wanted.

The remainder of the Dutch fleet was carried into Portsmouth ; whither it was accompanied by Count Byland, who refused to forsake it, though permission was given him to continue his voyage with the squadron under his command.

The complaints of the States General were loud and violent upon this occasion ; and yet they had manifestly violated the right of search established by treaty, and never yet called in question.

What rendered the conduct of the Dutch still more offensive, was, that while they assisted the enemies of Great Britain in this open decided manner, they forbade their subjects, under heavy penalties, to furnish the garrison of Gibraltar with provisions, notwithstanding Spain had at that very time behaved to the Dutch in a manner equally disrespectful and injurious to their interest.

This conduct betrayed a strange forgetfulness of the strong ties by which they were connected with Britain, and of the evident necessity of preserving that balance of power in Europe, in which Holland was more concerned than any state upon the continent. It shewed with what efficacy the enemies of Britain had exerted themselves, in overturning the political system that had so long prevailed in that republic ; and how opposite those maxims they had introduced, were to that close and intimate friendship with the British nation, of which, the utility had

had been proved by the experience of two centuries.

Incensed at these continual provocations, the Court of Great Britain resolved at length to express itself in terms so clear and decisive, as to draw an explicit answer from the States respecting their ultimate intentions to this country.

Towards the close of March, eighty, the British Ambassador at the Hague was directed to renew the requisition for the succours to which Great Britain was entitled by several treaties. It was now eight months since it had been laid before the Assembly of the States, during which time it had lain wholly unnoticed. He expostulated with them accordingly with great force and dignity. He reminded them of the many motives that should induce them to live in the strictest amity with Britain: and concluded by informing them, that if a favourable answer were not returned to his requisitions within the space of three weeks, the Court of Great Britain would look upon such refusal as a breach of the alliance, on the part of Holland; and would consider the Republic in no other light than as a neutral state, not privileged to particular favours by any treaty, and as having, by its conduct, made void all those that subsisted between both states.

The reply to this memorial, was, that the time prescribed was too limited for an answer to be given to it conformably to the rules and constitutions of the Republic. But this reply was viewed by the British ministry as a mere evasion. As the States General had been eight months in possession of the request now repeated, full leisure had been allowed them to deliberate upon it; and it was unbecoming to require any longer space for consultation.

In consequence of the answer given to the British Ambassador, it was now resolved at the Court of Great Britain, to put in force, conformably to the

notice he had given, the suspension of the privileges enjoyed by the subjects of Holland, in virtue of the concessions made in their favour by former treaties. After waiting the space of time notified, no satisfactory answer being returned, a declaration was published, wherein, after a circumstantial representation of the conduct observed by Holland since the commencement of hostilities, the above resolution was formally specified.

In the mean time, the British ministry was fully occupied in providing for the various possessions of Great Britain in foreign parts that were menaced by her numerous enemies. Among other places, Gibraltar was now closely invested, and pressed both at land and sea by the fleets and armies of Spain. Immediately on this Court's declaring its accession to the confederacy formed by France and America against Britain, Gibraltar was blockaded; and all means of supplying it with necessaries industriously cut off on every side.

The great abilities and valour of General Elliott, the Governor, afforded the best founded expectation of its making a vigorous defence: but the scantiness and uncertainty of the supplies it had received since the beginning of the siege, began to be very alarming; and it was now time it should be relieved in a regular and sufficient manner to enable it to continue a successful resistance.

To this purpose a strong squadron was prepared, and the command of it given to Sir George Rodney, whose services in the last war had recommended him to the notice of government. He fell in, a few days after sailing from England, with a Spanish fleet of sixteen transports, bound from Bilboa to Cales. They were laden with provisions and naval stores, and convoyed by a ship of sixty-four guns, four frigates, and two armed vessels. Only one transport escaped. The rest were taken, and proved

proved a heavy loss to the enemy ; who were at that time in great want both of provisions and materials for their shipping. This capture took place on the eighth of January, eighty.

On the sixteenth, a Spanish squadron of eleven sail of the line, was discovered off the Cape of St. Vincent. As the day was far advanced, in order to reach them the sooner, the British Admiral made the signal for a general chase, to engage as the ships came up, by rotation, and to take the lee gage, in order to prevent the enemy from retreating into their own ports.

The action began at four in the afternoon ; the headmost ships in the British squadron closing in with the nearest of the enemy. In about half an hour one of their ships, mounting seventy guns, and carrying six hundred men, blew up, and they all perished. After two hours fight, another Spanish ship of the line was taken. The action continued with great vigour on both sides, till two o'clock in the morning ; when the headmost ship of the enemy struck to the Sandwich : after which they ceased firing.

The weather was so tempestuous during the night, that it was with extreme difficulty possession could be taken of those ships that had surrendered. They were six in number ; of which two went on shore and were lost, and the other four were brought safe into Gibraltar. They consisted of the Spanish Admiral's own ship of eighty guns, and seven hundred men, and three of seventy guns, and six hundred men.

This engagement happened so near the shore, and the British ships were so eager in securing the lee gage, to prevent the enemy's escape, that Admiral Rodney's ship, and some of the largest in the fleet, were in great danger of running on the shoals off the coast of St. Lucar. Nor did they return into deep

deep water, till after much labour, and the exertion of great seamanship.

The behaviour of the Spaniards in this conflict was very brave and spirited: but notwithstanding their gallant behaviour, it was the opinion of all who were present in the action, that had it taken place by day, or the weather been less boisterous, not one of them would have escaped. Those that did were so considerably damaged, as to be unfit for service.

The Spanish Admiral, Don Juan de Langara, behaved with great courage, and did not surrender till after an obstinate resistance. The ship he struck to was commanded by Captain Macbride. Having the small pox on board, a distemper of which the Spaniards are remarkably apprehensive, he notified it to the enemy, offering to send a party of his own people on board of them, without shifting any of theirs to his own ship, provided the Spanish Admiral and his officers would pledge their honour, that the British seamen should not be interrupted in the possession of their prize. This humane proposal was accepted with the highest expressions of gratitude, and complied with in every point that had been required, with the utmost honour and punctuality.

The consequences of this important victory were, the complete relief of Gibraltar, and of Minorca, both of which, till this event, had been considered as in a state of imminent peril.

After performing these services, Admiral Rodney sailed for the West Indies; where he was commissioned to assume the chief command. Admiral Digby proceeded home with the fleet and the prizes, and had the good fortune to fall in with a French man of war of sixty-four guns, which he took. It convoyed, with another ship of the line, a large number of ships bound to the islands of Mauritius; with military stores and recruits. They were too

far

far distant when first perceived, to be pursued with success; and only three of the store-ships were taken: the rest escaped with the other ship of the line, and reached their destination.

These various successes occasioned uncommon satisfaction in England. They came at a critical season; and contributed powerfully, not only to raise the spirit of the British nation, but to damp the hopes that had been formed in France and Spain, of striking a decisive blow at the opening of the naval campaign, by the re-union of the French and Spanish navies. The best officers and seamen in the marine service of Spain were in the squadron that had been taken or destroyed; and the ships themselves were in the best condition of any in the Spanish navy.

Sir George Rodney was honoured upon this occasion with an unanimous vote of thanks from both Houses of Parliament. Their consideration of his services was so warm, that they zealously recommended him as deserving of the most signal notice and recompence on the part of the Crown. In this they were the more urgent, as the Admiral's domestic affairs were in much disorder, when he was appointed to the command of the expedition wherein he had been so successful. There were also other motives for wishing to see him provided for in an honourable and liberal manner. Among others he had, while in France, refused some very advantageous proffers conveyed to him through persons of the first distinction; who had strongly urged him to enter into the naval service of that crown. But though the prospects held out to him were very brilliant, and he was at the time in circumstances of distress, he nobly refused to take part with the enemies of his country.

C H A P. LIII.

Charlestown taken by Sir Henry Clinton.—Successes of Lord Cornwallis.

1780.

THE preceding campaign had terminated very disadvantageously to the Americans. The maritime force of the New England provinces had been almost wholly destroyed at Penobscot; and they had suffered a great and mortifying defeat at Savannah. The mighty projects formed by D'Estaing had been frustrated in the completest manner. He had been vanquished and compelled to retire with a shattered fleet and a broken army. Unable to prosecute any further operations, he was now returned to France, and the Colonies were again left to their sole exertions, with little prospect of receiving any assistance from their French allies, in sufficient time to obviate effectually the attempts that might be made, in consequence of the superiority now obtained by the British forces.

While the fate of D'Estaing was in suspense, the apprehension that he could not fail of success with such a superior strength, obliged the British commanders at New York to make all necessary preparations for a vigorous defence. General Washington had collected all the strength he could muster from the contiguous provinces, and was advancing towards that city, in order to be at hand to co-operate in the attack concerted between him and the French Admiral.

The necessity of adding materially to the numbers that would be requisite to make head against so formidable an enemy, occasioned the garrison of Rhode

Rhode Island to be recalled from that station to reinforce the troops at New York. Thus, had the French commander succeeded at Savannah, it was much to be doubted, whether he would have been equally successful in the subsequent part of his design.

But his defeat and expulsion from Georgia, having given a new turn to affairs, a different plan of operations took place of course in the councils of the British commanders at New York. The disappointment experienced by the Americans had greatly dispirited them. The troops that had resorted to General Washington from various parts, in full confidence of putting an end to the war by a decisive blow, now returned home in high discontent, and bitterly complaining that no reliance could be placed on their new ally; from whom they had hitherto received great promises but little effects.

In this state of public dissatisfaction among the Americans, it was resolved to carry the British arms southward; where the distance from the center of the enemy's strength opened a fair prospect of success, and where an impression upon them would be more severely felt than elsewhere, from the greater value of the countries, of which reduction was in view, in point of riches and commercial produce and importance.

The possession of Georgia afforded a ready access to the large and valuable Province of Carolina. From this motive, and those above mentioned, it was determined to make this the object of an expedition, while the enemy's force was in a great measure scattered and dispersed by the disbanding of the major part of the army under General Washington, and the splitting of the other corps into numerous detachments, for the purpose of protecting the various places that were liable to be attacked.

Towards

Towards the close of the year seventy-nine, Sir Henry Clinton embarked with a considerable land force, under the convoy of a strong squadron commanded by Admiral Arbuthnot. Their destination was Savannah; but their progress was much retarded by contrary winds and stormy weather. They did not arrive off the coast of Georgia till the expiration of January.

On the twelfth of February the army was safely landed on the islands in the vicinity of Charles Town; and from thence proceeded to the banks of Ashley's river; between which and Cooper's river that town is situated.

Here he was obliged to remain a considerable time, waiting for the arrival of the necessary stores, and implements for the carrying on of the intended siege of that place. This delay was chiefly occasioned by the loss of the principal ordnance ship, which was sunk in a gale of wind on the passage from New York, and by the loss of the draft-horses belonging to the artillery.

Owing to these, and a multitude of other impediments, several of them arising from the nature of the climate, and of the ground that was the scene of action, it was near the close of March before the British forces crossed the river Ashley. This motion was made under the protection of the armed gallies. The boats of the fleet landed the whole army, with the artillery and stores requisite for the siege, without any resistance on the part of the enemy.

From the deficiency of battering cannon, occasioned by the loss of the ordnance ship, the British General was obliged to have recourse to the Admiral, for a supply of pieces of heavy metal. A sufficient number were in consequence landed, with a detachment of seamen under the command of Captain Elphinstone.

The day after the army had made good its passage over Ashley river, it advanced to Charles Town. It broke ground within eight hundred yards of the enemy's works, in the night of the first of April; and in seven days after, had perfected the batteries proposed, and mounted them with cannon.

On the eighth of April Admiral Arbuthnot forced his way into Charles Town harbour, under a heavy fire from Fort Sullivan, which damaged several of his ships. He took complete possession of all the different passes, and entirely blockaded the town on that side.

The gaining of the harbour of Charles Town was the heavier a disappointment, as the Americans were firmly persuaded, from the vigorous and fortunate resistance made by Fort Sullivan, two years before, that it would have obstructed the entrance of the British squadron with the like success.

Depending on the efficacy of the defence it would make; they had moored several ships and gallies in a position to make a raking fire on the British squadron, on its approaching the fort; and doubted not being able to reduce it to such a condition, as to frustrate all expectations of succeeding in any attempt of that nature.

They had also, as a further means of prevention, sunk in the channel leading to the town, four large frigates, with several merchant ships, fitted with chevaux de frize on their decks, in the manner of those that had been formerly sunk in the Delaware to the same intent. An immense boom was also extended across this channel. It was composed of spars, chains, and cables; secured together by ships masts; and it was defended on the side of the town by strong batteries, mounting upwards of forty pieces of heavy cannon.

These obstacles being surmounted, and the British squadron having taken possession of the harbour, Sir

Sir Henry Clinton and Admiral Arbuthnot jointly summoned the town to surrender; but General Lincoln, who commanded there, answered that he would defend it to the last extremity.

On this refusal, the batteries were opened on the ninth of April, and operated with such effect, as quickly to abate the fire of the enemy. The works were carried on with so much spirit and activity, that the besiegers in a few days approached, within little more than four hundred yards of the town.

In order to cut off the communication between the town and country, a detachment of chosen men was formed; the command of which was given to Colonel Webster, an officer of noted skill and bravery: He was accompanied by Colonel Tarleton, with a body of cavalry; and by Major Ferguson, with a party of light infantry.

The enterprize they were sent upon, was attended with a variety of difficulties. They had rivers to cross, and other arduous operations to execute, in presence of an enemy strongly posted, and who had a very superior cavalry. It was principally at this corps their efforts were aimed. Through the great diligence and dexterity of Colonel Tarleton, it was surprised and totally defeated. This obstruction being removed, Colonel Webster advanced into the country, and seized all the principal passes, by which means the town was now completely invested.

These successes enabled the British army to carry on the siege with additional vigour. The enemy, on the other hand, made no less resolute a defence. They had used great industry in fortifying the place. The neck of land inclosed between the two rivers, Ashley and Cooper, was a continued chain of lines, redoubts, and batteries. At their extremities, towards both rivers, they were covered by deep swamps, communicating by a canal cut along their

their front. In the intermediate space between these works, and the body of the place, were two rows of fallen trees, fixed into the earth, in the manner of a fraise work: behind these was a double picketed ditch. In the center of the lines they had constructed a kind of citadel: the artillery mounted on these different works, consisted of eighty-pieces of cannon and mortars.

The siege of Charles Town had in the mean while greatly alarmed the contiguous provinces. Sensible how much it behoved them to preserve a place of such importance, they were exerting their utmost endeavours to raise a force sufficient to its relief. The defeat of the troops in the neighbourhood of Charles Town, by Colonel Webster, had greatly disconcerted them. But that which they regretted most, was the destruction of their cavalry by Colonel Tarleton. They were at uncommon pains to repair this loss; and with much industry and expence collected another body of horse, which was immediately dispatched to the assistance of the troops that were advancing from various quarters to the aid of the besieged. But on receiving intelligence of their approach, Colonel Tarleton was ordered to attack them. He executed his commission with so much success, that almost the whole corps was either taken or destroyed; and all the horses with their accoutrements fell into the hands of the victors.

While these successes were obtained in the country bordering upon Charles Town, Admiral Arbuthnot was exerting himself with no less vigour and good fortune on that side which lay towards the sea. He formed a brigade of seamen and marines, with which he made himself master of forts Mount-pleasant and Sullivan. The garrison of the first abandoned it without resistance, and that of the second surrendered by capitulation.

By

By the sixth of May the besiegers had pushed their works to the canal that connected the two swamps on the right and left, and had almost drained it. They passed it three days after, and advanced towards the ditch next to the body of the place.

In this extremity, finding that no relief was to be expected, and the British army was preparing for a general assault, the American Governor proposed to deliver up the town on terms which had already been offered him ; but which he had rejected.

By these terms it was agreed, that the American troops and seamen were to remain prisoners of war till exchanged ; but not to be despoiled of their private property : the militia to return to their dwellings, there to abide as prisoners on their parole ; on keeping which, they were to be secure from all molestation. The citizens of Charles Town to be comprehended in this article. The subjects of France and Spain to retain their effects, with permission to leave the place ; but to continue prisoners on parole.

The British army took possession of Charles Town on the twelfth of May. The prisoners made on this occasion amounted to upwards of six thousand ; among whom were a thousand seamen. Seven general officers were taken ; and a prodigious number of others, from the eagerness with which all those who were in the vicinity of Charles Town repaired to its defence.

The artillery that fell into the hands of the victors, consisted of near four hundred pieces ; and the shipping, of four large frigates, and a great quantity of boats, with considerable supplies of military stores.

The consequence of the reduction of Charles Town, was a general discouragement of the people

in the neighbouring provinces ; and no little alarm and discontent throughout the continent, when the vast expectations excited by D'Estaing were contrasted with his failure, and the successes of the British arms under Sir Henry Clinton.

As no doubt was entertained that he would lose no opportunity of improving them to the utmost, great pains were taken by the Americans to collect with all possible speed, a force sufficient to make some stand, till a proper army could be formed. To this purpose detachments from several parts were drawn to the borders of North Carolina, where it was naturally expected the motions of the British army would next be directed.

On receiving this intelligence, Lord Cornwallis marched up the country situated along the banks of the river Santee. The enemy were posted at a place called Waccaw, on the boundary line between North and South Carolina, distant from him upwards of one hundred miles. Colonel Tarleton was again selected to command a chosen body, in order to attack them before they could be reinforced. He travelled with such expedition, that he reached them on the third day of his march. Upon refusing to surrender on the terms he proffered, which were the same that had been granted to the garrison of Charles Town, he attacked them with so much courage and skill, that they were nearly all either killed in the action, or wounded and made prisoners, with all their artillery and baggage. This was the third victory obtained by means of the British cavalry, commanded by Colonel Tarleton. Their numbers both in this and the foregoing engagements, were inferior to those of the enemy ; but the men were chosen troopers, and admirably expert at the management of their horses and arms.

This action decided for the present the fate of Carolina. The bravery exhibited by the British troops during

during the whole of this service, had been remarkably conspicuous. Both the naval and military branches co-operated with a warmth and emulation that struck a damp upon the enemy from the very beginning. Among those who chiefly distinguished themselves, besides those that have been mentioned, was Major Moncrief, so deservedly celebrated for his defence of Sayannah, in the capacity of engineer against Count D'Estaing. He acquired no less glory in his conduct of the attack upon Charles Town; where he displayed a genius and abilities that gained him the highest admiration.

All resistance now fell before the British arms in South Carolina. It was considered as completely reduced; and arrangements were in consequence taken by Sir Henry Clinton to secure its possession against all future attempts from the enemy. Most of the people in the Province were either prisoners, or protest adherence to the cause of Britain.

Encouraged by these flattering appearances, he issued several proclamations in order to excite the well-affected to behave with attachment and fidelity; and to deter the opposite party from causing any disturbances. The plan he proposed to follow in the establishment of that Province, was to render all persons acknowledging allegiance to the British government, instrumental in its defence. To this intent they were divided in two classes of militia: such men as had families, were allotted to the guard of their respective districts: such as had none, were to be embodied in the same manner as the others under their own officers, and to be employed in conjunction with the British troops, in repelling invasions, and keeping the enemy out of the Province. They were not, however, to march beyond the limits of Georgia and North Carolina; and after serving six months out of the ensuing

twelve, in the manner prescribed, they were to be exempted from all, but the common duties of the militia.

Sir Henry Clinton had promised himself great utility from these regulations. He was certainly well founded in his expectations. A loyal and affectionate address had been presented to him, and Admiral Arbuthnot, a few days before the reduction of Charles Town, signed by two hundred and ten of the principal inhabitants. Numbers came in also from every part of the country, declaring their allegiance, and offering their services in support of the British government. Many of them, in proof of their fidelity, had seized their leaders, and brought them prisoners to the British quarters.

During the expedition of Sir Henry Clinton to Charles Town, the city of New York was exposed, by the severity of the winter that followed after his departure, to the greatest danger it had experienced ever since its reduction by the British army in the year seventy-six. The frost began with the year eighty, and lasted with unremitting violence till towards the close of February. The rivers in the neighbourhood of New York, and the streights and channels between the circumjacent islands, were so firmly frozen, as to bear the heaviest weight of waggons or carriages of any kind.

The British commanders in that city were justly apprehensive that the enemies would not fail to avail themselves of so favourable an opportunity of making an attempt upon it. As it was now united to the continent by the plains of ice that surrounded it on every side, its situation was become extremely dangerous; and called up their whole attention and endeavours to put it in a state of defence against the attacks to which it was so widely exposed.

All that were able to bears arms, were employed upon this occasion. As the ships of war were fast locked in the ice, their seamen came ashore, and were formed into companies under their own officers. The crews of the transports and other vessels had also their stations appointed them. The body of sailors that did duty, amounted to upwards of fifteen hundred, and the citizens that were embodied, to near three thousand. This was an essential addition to the regular troops, and removed all apprehension on account of any attempt from the enemy.

Apprized of these preparations, the Americans did not think proper to form any enterprize against that city : they contended themselves with harassing some out posts ; without meeting however, with any success. Neither was the situation of General Washington such as to enable him to undertake so daring a project as the attack of New York, in the circumstances of strength it had now acquired. His army was considerably diminished by the departure of those numbers whose time of service was expired ; and the winter was too severe to expect any recruits before the inclemency of the weather was abated.

The most agreeable consequence resulting from the criticalness of this emergency, was the proof given by multitudes of the Americans of their sincere attachment to the cause of Britain. Most of the volunteers raised among the inhabitants of New York, were cloathed and armed at their own expence ; and they underwent the fatigue and hardships incident to the season, and the occasion that had called them forth, with great spirit and alacrity.

In the mean while the specious appearances of subission in the Province of South Carolina, did not last long after the departure of Sir Henry Clinton. The aversion to the British government was

so deeply rooted in the dispositions of the inhabitants, that numbers of them were daily offering their property to sale on the best terms they could find, in order to quit that Province. But as many of these were largely indebted to British subjects, a proclamation was issued by Lord Cornwallis, prohibiting the disposal of property, and the removal of individuals, without a special permission first obtained.

The loyal party in North Carolina, encouraged by the successes of the British arms, began now to meditate an insurrection in their favour; but they were so narrowly watched, that they found it impossible to carry such a design into any effectual execution. Hurried by their impatience, and prompted by the severe treatment they experienced, a considerable number of them rose tumultuously, and without the previous formation of any plan of acting; the consequence of which was, that they were quickly suppressed, and compelled to consult their safety by making the best of their way to the British quarters.

The attention of Congress was now seriously turned to the recovery of South Carolina; the importance of which was now the more felt from its unexpected loss. Large detachments of regulars were collected from every quarter whence they could be spared, and dispatched with all speed to reinforce the troops remaining in the vicinity of that Province: Virginia and North Carolina, which were most interested, as being nearest the scene of danger, exerted themselves with great vigour. Virginia in particular, in order to act with the greater celerity and effect, invested the Governor appointed by their new constitution, with absolute power during the recess of their Provincial Assembly. This was the first act of the kind that had taken place in any of the United States; it was probably suggested by the

the recollection of the dictatorial power occasionally conferred upon persons of great trust and abilities in ancient Rome, in times of difficulty and distress.

Lord Cornwallis prepared to meet these hostile exertions with his usual activity. He was effectually seconded in his views by Lord Rawdon, a young nobleman whose valour and military talents began at this time to display themselves with uncommon lustre. The town of Camden was fixed upon as the centre of operations, from its convenient situation on the Santee, a large river, navigable through a great extent of country, and at hand to convey stores and troops to various parts of the Province, and especially to those bordering on North Carolina, from whence the efforts of the enemy were chiefly expected.

Experience daily shewed what small reliance could be placed on those who had submitted to, and promised to support the British government.—General Gates and Baron Kalbe, a German officer of high merit, were now advancing in great force to oppose the progress of Lord Cornwallis. As soon as they had reached the confines of South Carolina, the people of this Province repaired to them from every district, regardless of their assurances of fidelity, and of their being prisoners on parole. Bodies raised for the British service, took the first opportunity to leave it; two whole battalions went over to the enemy in this manner.

General Gates was now at the head of so considerable a force, that the post at Camden was become very much exposed. His main-body pressed it on the one side, and a strong detachment, under General Sumpter, was endeavouring to cut off its communication with Charlestown. The whole country beyond Camden had declared in his favour. The troops there were in a very reduced condition through

through the heat and the unhealthiness of the climate ; no less than eight hundred were from illness rendered unfit for service : this was an alarming diminution to so small an army in the midst of an enemy's country.

Such were the circumstances of the British forces Lord Cornwallis arrived at Camden. From the great superiority of the Americans, it was imagined by them that he would have retreated to Charlestown, while it still lay open to him, and would not have dared to venture an engagement with General Gates, who had near six thousand men in excellent condition, exclusive of the body under General Sumpter, amounting to fifteen hundred, and which was every hour expected to join him.

To oppose this force, Lord Cornwallis had no more than fourteen hundred regulars, with four or five hundred militia and refugees from North Carolina ; but he relied on the goodness of his troops. He also foresaw that much was to be gained by a victory, and little to be lost by a defeat. By the first he would preserve, together with the reputation of the British arms, the Provinces of South Carolina and Georgia, besides the post of Camden, with the vast quantity of stores there deposited, and the great proportion of sick troops, which, if he retired, would fall into the hands of the enemy.— Were he, on the other hand, to be defeated, he made no doubt of being able to secure his retreat to Charlestown, at all events.

Having taken the determination to fight the Americans, his next care was to procure information of their situation and motions. Finding that they were encamped at twelve miles distance, and that their best troops occupied a disadvantageous ground, he resolved to march in the night, in order to surprise and attack them by the break of day.

He

He set out from Camden at ten, and at two in the morning, after proceeding nine miles his advanced guard fell in with the enemy. By the weight of the fire he was convinced they were in considerable force, and soon found by the report of some prisoners, that General Gates had marched his whole army to attack the post at Camden.

Lord Cornwallis immediately halted and formed his troops; the enemy did the same, and the firing ceased on both sides. Happily for the British army, the ground where both armies were met was narrowed by swamps on the right and left, which was an advantageous circumstance to the small numbers of which the British army consisted. Lord Cornwallis having taken measures that the enemy should not have it in their power to avoid an engagement on that ground, resolved to defer the attack till day, not chusing to risk an engagement in the uncertainty and confusion to which an action in the dark is peculiarly liable.

As soon as the dawn appeared, the British forces ^{August 16, 1780.} drew up in order of battle; the centre under Lord Cornwallis, the right wing under Colonel Webster, and the left under Lord Rawdon; a select body of reserve was stationed in the rear, together with the cavalry, under Colonel Tarleton.

The American army formed at the same time in two lines; when Lord Cornwallis observing a motion on their left, which indicated an intention to make some alteration in their order, he seized that opportunity to begin the attack, which was begun with great vigour by Colonel Webster on the right, and in a few minutes the action became general along the whole front of the line.

The weather being calm and hazy, prevented the smoke from rising, and occasioned so thick a darkness, that the effects of the vigorous fire maintained

ed on both sides could not be perceived. The British line continued to advance in good order, keeping up a constant fire, or making use of the bayonet, as opportunity offered. After an obstinate resistance during three quarters of an hour, the enemy was thrown into total confusion, and forced to give way in all quarters. The cavalry completed the rout, and after doing great execution on the field of battle, pursued the flying enemy more than twenty miles.

The loss of the enemy was very considerable.—The slain amounted to near nine hundred, and the prisoners to one thousand. Among the former were General Gregory and Baron Kalbe, the second General officer in command: among the latter was General Rutherford. A great number of colours were taken, with all the artillery and ammunition, and all the baggage and camp equipage. Of the victors not more than seventy were slain, and two hundred and fifty wounded.

So complete a victory over an army so superior in number, did the highest honour to the British troops. Nor were the Americans, though defeated, wanting in proofs of firmness and intrepidity: their regulars behaved with great resolution, and were only broken at the point of the bayonet.

The conduct of Lord Cornwallis was remarkably cool and intrepid on this day. From the beginning to the end of the action, not a single opportunity was lost that tended to success. Every advantage that offered was instantly discovered, and immediately improved to the utmost. He was no less ably seconded by his officers, among whom Lord Rawdon, with Colonels Webster and Tarleton signalized themselves most conspicuously.

This victory was a very unexpected event to the Americans, who had considered themselves as certain of success. General Gates had some days before

fore the battle issued a proclamation, by the terms of which it was plain that he entertained no doubt of expelling the British forces from the posts they occupied in South Carolina.

Nor were the troops under his command less confident of success. In this hope they submitted to extreme hardships in their march through the Carolinas towards Camden. They were sometimes without bread, flour, meal, or meat for several days, and compelled to feed on apples, green peaches, and corn unripe. But they bore their wants with great patience, in expectation of finding ample relief at Camden, from whence they doubted not the British troops would retreat to Charles town on their approach.

Two days after the action at Camden, Lord Cornwallis detached Colonel Tarleton in quest of the American General Sumpter, who with a considerable body had for some time been successfully employed in harassing the convoys of provisions coming from Charlestown. As he was advantageously posted near the fords of the river Catawba, it was apprehended that the routed army might from that consideration, repair to his encampment, and re-assemble there in force sufficient to make a fresh stand, till they received further succours.

Colonel Tarleton executed this commission with his usual activity and address. Having procured information of General Sumpter's situation, he came up with him by forced and concealed marches, and ordered his motions with such dexterity, that he surprized his camp in the middle of the day.—The American General's detachment was totally destroyed or dispersed; three hundred were made prisoners, besides the slain, and near three hundred of the British troops, whom they had captured, were retaken.

This

This last defeat of the enemy gave the finishing blow to the hopes they had formed of regaining possession of South Carolina, and inspired the friends of the British government with a determination to exert themselves in obviating all attempts on the part of the disaffected. To this purpose they seized, in conformity with the directions of Lord Cornwallis, on the arms of those who lay under suspicion of enmity, and kept a watchful eye on all their motions.

The loyal party in North Carolina were also directed on this occasion to take up arms and assemble immediately, in order to apprehend the most violent among their opponents, and to take possession of all their military stores and magazines, and at the same time to intercept all stragglers from the routed army. To encourage them in the execution of these orders, Lord Cornwallis proposed without loss of time, to advance with his whole army to their support.

This was the more necessary, as notwithstanding their late defeat, the American officers were exerting the utmost industry to repair their shattered army. As the remains of it were much superior in number to the British forces at Camden, and in the environs of that place, Lord Cornwallis was obliged to use the utmost circumspection in all his movements. The sick and wounded in his army were very numerous, and the reduction of strength he had suffered, though small in comparison to the greatness of the victory of which it had been the price, disabled him for a time from improving it in a manner adequate to its importance, and corresponding with the plan he had formed, and would have executed, had circumstances been favourable to his activity.

C H A P. LIV.

Naval Operations in the West Indies.—Proceedings in North America.

1780.

WHILE the British arms were thus prospering on the continent of North America, the honour of the British flag was no less strenuously maintained in the West Indian seas. Notwithstanding the superiority of force of which the French were possessed, they were unable to render it of the efficacy they had expected. Monsieur De Guichen was now at Martinico with twenty-five sail of the line. He came at the head of this formidable fleet in sight of St. Lucia. He was accompanied with eight large frigates, and a number of transports full of troops, intending to land and attack the island; but the dispositions made on shore by General Vaughan, and the judicious arrangement of the squadron under Admiral Hyde Parker, with the recollection of what had happened on the same spot to Count D'Estaing a twelvemonth before, prevented the French Admiral from making any attempt; and he returned to Martinico after having made an ineffectual parade for several days.

The same vigour was displayed on the Jamaica station. Several Spanish ships of force and value were taken: among others, one of fifty guns, laden with a vast quantity of military stores for the settlements on the Spanish Main.

The junction of Spain to France in the quarrel against Britain, enabled them to acquire a naval superiority in this latitude, from which they promised themselves great advantages. Monsieur De

la Motte Piquet was at this time cruizing in these parts with a strong squadron, for the protection of the French trade. While employed in convoying a large fleet of merchantmen, he fell in with three British ships of war, of sixty-four, fifty, and forty-four guns. His own force consisted of four ships of seventy-four guns, and two frigates. Notwithstanding this great disparity, the British commander, Captain Cornwallis, received the enemy with the most determined resolution, and maintained a vigorous fight from five in the afternoon, during the whole night, and part of the next day; the remainder of which was employed in repairing damages on each side. In the morning of the ensuing day, a British man of war of sixty-four guns fortunately came in sight, with two frigates. Encouraged by this accession of strength, Captain Cornwallis resolutely bore down upon the enemy, notwithstanding the great superiority they still possessed. But the French ships had suffered so much in the foregoing engagement, that they did not think proper to renew it. This action, in which the French Admiral was wounded, gained much reputation to Captain Cornwallis; and impressed the enemy with the highest opinion of the skill and intrepidity of the British officers and seamen. It was particularly noticed in this engagement, that the French studiously avoided a close fight, and kept as much at a distance as they could, consistently with the intent of doing execution. This remarkable action happened on the twenty-fifth of march, eighty. It was spoken of throughout all Europe with the highest admiration, and strongly confirmed the opinions of those who had ventured, notwithstanding the formidable combination against Great Britain, to foretell that she would face it with honour, and come out of all her difficulties in defiance of their number and magnitude.

In the latter end of March, Admiral Rodney arrived at St. Lucia, and assumed the command of the British fleet. He directly determined to go in quest of Monsieur De Guichen, and offer him battle. He sailed accordingly from St. Lucia on the second of April, and proceeded to Fort Royal Bay at Martinico, where he lay two days so close in with the French fleet, as to count their guns, and near enough to exchange shot with some of their batteries ashore.

The French, notwithstanding their superiority, keeping in port, the British fleet returned to St. Lucia, with the honour of having challenged them to fight. Some swift sailing frigates were left to watch their motions, and give notice, in case they should sail out of their harbour.

On the fifteenth the French fleet put to sea in the middle of the night. On receiving this notice, Admiral Rodney followed them with all expedition, and came in sight of them before night. Their fleet consisted of twenty-four sail of the line, and four frigates; the British fleet of twenty sail of the line, and two frigates.

The enemy's motions tended evidently to avoid an engagement; but the precautions taken to defeat their intent were so effectual, that seeing themselves compelled to engage, they formed their line of battle about break of day.

Between eight and nine in the morning, Admiral Rodney made a signal to bear down upon the enemy; which perceiving, they altered their position to one more advantageous than their former, and continued in this manner varying their motions, in order to elude the dispositions of the British fleet.

At twelve the signal was made for battle, and for a close engagement; and about one the headmost ships commenced the action; at which time the Sandwich in the center began to engage. By four in

the afternoon she had driven three ships successively out of the line; after which she was attacked by the French Admiral, of equal force to herself, assisted by two other ships of seventy-four guns. Though alone, she encountered them all three with so much spirit and skill, that after an engagement of an hour and a half, they were obliged to bear away. This broke the center of the enemy's line, and they appeared by their motions to be completely defeated: but the great distance of the van and rear divisions of the British fleet from the center, and the damages sustained by some of the ships during the action, prevented a pursuit: the Sandwich in particular was in so dangerous a condition, that it was with difficulty she was for the ensuing twenty-four hours kept above water.

Two days after, the British fleet having repaired its damages, went in pursuit of the enemy, and chased them three days without being able to overtake them. They constantly avoided coming to action; their intention being to recover their station at Martinico. But finding they could not compass it without hazarding an engagement, they took shelter under Guadalupe.

As it was plain, however, from their motions, that their intentions were to return to Martinico, where only they could be refitted, Admiral Rodney made the best of his way to the road of Fort Royal, as the most probable chance of meeting and bringing them to action.

The number of slain and wounded on board the British fleet, amounted to about four hundred and seventy; among the former was Captain St. John, of the Intrepid: the French fleet was near a thousand, according to their own account.

It was with no small surprize, the people at Martinico beheld the British fleet cruizing off that island, after having been told that it was entirely defeated. After remaining there some time, the enemy

enemy not appearing, it was found necessary to repair to St. Lucia, in order to put the sick and wounded ashore, and to refit and water the fleet.

This being effected, Admiral Rodney put to sea on the sixth of May, in consequence of being apprised the French fleet was returning to Martinico. He came in sight of it on the tenth; but notwithstanding the enemy still had the superiority of number, they could not be induced to risk a general action, though it was daily in their power.

As they were sensible of their advantage in sailing, they ventured to approach the British fleet, in order to observe its movements and condition, relying on their ability to elude a pursuit. Admiral Rodney, who was watchful of every opportunity of drawing them to action, decoyed them by an appearance of retreating, into such a position, as enabled a part of his fleet to come up with them.

None but the van of the British fleet could have any share in the engagement, from the expedition with which the enemy continued to withdraw, and the impossibility of bringing the remainder of the fleet into action. Captain Bowyer of the Albion, and Admiral Rowley in the Conqueror, both of seventy-four guns, bore the brunt of the day; and though they suffered from the vast superiority they had to encounter, the damage they did to the enemy was such, that before parting they had almost silenced the fire of the rear of the French fleet. This engagement happened on the fifteenth of May.

The enemy kept their distance, as usual, until the nineteenth; when the British fleet having fetched their rear, they were again brought to action in order to extricate it. Commodore Hotham, who commanded the van, attacked them with great spirit, and compelled them during some time to a close fight, in which they suffered severely. They were pursued in their retreat to a great distance; when

the swiftness of their sailing having carried them out of sight, Admiral Rodney stood towards Barbados, to repair and victual the fleet, in order to enable it to go in quest of the Spanish fleet that had sailed from Cadiz to the assistance of the French, before these could again be in a condition to put to sea.

The courage and dexterity displayed by the officers and seamen of the British fleet, in these two last encounters especially, was highly remarkable. Captain Bowyer again signalized himself in the latter of these, no less than he had done in the former; as did also Admiral Rowley, on board of whom his Captain, Watson, an officer of great merit and bravery, was mortally wounded.

These several actions terminating so honourably to the British fleet, struck both the French and Spanish islands with great terror. It was in vain the French published, that the advantages were on their side. The appearance of the British fleet, after the first action, in sight of Martinico, and the retreat of the French fleet to that island, after the two last, were a positive refutation of their accounts. It was well known, that had the French been successful, the superior quickness of their sailing must have enabled them to obtain the completest victory, and to have taken or destroyed every ship belonging to the British fleet.

While these transactions were taking place in the West Indian seas, the people on the continent of North America were beginning to lose patience at the duration of the war, and the continuation of the difficulties under which they laboured. It had been the sanguine expectation of the Colonies, that the alliance they had formed with the House of Bourbon, would have proved a decisive measure in their favour, and compelled Great Britain to have given up the contest. But when they saw that instead

stead of being disheartened, the British nation had gathered fresh courage from the very accession of this inveterate enemy to the quarrel with their American dependencies, and that instead of losing ground, they had, on the contrary, faced both France and Spain with success, numbers of the Americans grew discontented, and expressed themselves in terms highly offensive to the ruling powers among them. They discovered in their allies a deficiency of means to accomplish the ends they had in view, of which they had no idea; and they no less perceived in the spirit and resources of Britain, the prolongation of a war, of which they had fondly hoped to see a speedy termination to their advantage.

So unexpected an issue to their expectations, began to stagger the resolution of multitudes. Free discourses were held on the circumstances of the Colonies; and it was surmised that a reconciliation with the parent state on constitutional terms, was no undesirable an object; and preferable to a struggle, that had hitherto produced nothing but hardship and misery.

Ideas and conversations of this kind were frequent even in Philadelphia itself. They could not fail to prove greatly repugnant to the views of the principal persons who presided over the affairs of America. Whatever might be the sense and wishes of the majority, the ambition of the ruling party was so deeply interested in suppressing the growth of such notions, that every precaution was used to discourage them, and to silence those who ventured to express themselves in a manner so contradictory to the maxims established among them by public authority.

Though Congress was duly sensible of the danger that might accrue from conniving at such freedoms, it does not appear to have interposed avow-

edly in counteracting them. Possibly the members of that body did not think it prudent to acknowledge the reality of any dissatisfaction among their constituents. But in their default, and not improbably through their instigation, the matter was zealously taken up by the military officers in their service, at that time in Philadelphia.

At a meeting held in that city in the month of April, of the year eighty, they came to a determination, "That it was their duty to take a fixed and unalterable resolution to curb the spirit of insolence and audacity manifested by the deluded and disaffected." Such were their own words.

"To effect this salutary purpose," said they, "we do declare to our country, that we will not associate, or hold communication with any persons who have exhibited by their conduct an im- mical disposition, or even lukewarmness to the independence of America; nor with any person who may give encouragement or countenance to them, however reputable his character, or dignified his office.

"We do also declare, that we will hold any gentleman bearing a military commission, who may attempt to contravene the objects of this declaration, as a proper object of contempt, and that we will with alacrity seize every opportunity of evincing to the world our abhorrence of a conduct so derogatory to the dignity of the army."

This declaration did not, however, put a stop to the liberty of speech that had been lately assumed by such numbers. The interference of the military seemed, on the contrary, to have given disgust to many; who did not abstain from complaints, that they had deviated from their proper line by this interposition, and exercised an authority which belonged only to the civil power. The consequences of the army's assuming the powers of government

vernment in the unhappy days of Charles the First, were commemorated on this occasion ; and the necessity of obviating such an evil in its first appearance, was no less strenuously insisted on.

But if this act of the military met with disapprobation from some, it was no less warmly countenanced by others ; and excited a fresh exertion of enmity to Britain in several of those who had most influence in public matters.

In the declaration published by the officers, they had complained of an improper lenity in government ; and that from the principles of universal liberty on which it was founded, people derived a disposition to act and speak licentiously.

The council of state in the Province of Pennsylvania, took advantage of this complaint, to make use of the executive power with which it was invested, in carrying into execution a measure of great severity. It published an ordinance, enjoining the wives and families of individuals in the opposite party to leave the Province in the space of ten days ; and threatened that whoever of them remained after that time, should be entitled to no protection, but be proceeded against as enemies of the state.

The motives assigned for this severe edict, were, that their residence was injurious to the public interest, from the correspondence and intercourse which it constantly occasioned with the enemy, and the consequent danger resulting from them.

From the capture of Charlestown by Sir Henry Clinton, the successes of Lord Cornwallis, and the vigour with which Britain opposed France and Spain, the affairs of the Americans were at this time in a very critical situation. It was become so visible, and was so thoroughly felt, that it was thought indispensably requisite by the ruling party at Philadelphia, to keep a stricter eye than ever on all

all those whom they suspected to waver in their attachment to the republican system. For this reason they required all individuals to produce certificates that they had sworn fidelity to the state,

In the mean time, as the publications among the Colonists teemed with reproaches of the most arbitrary and merciless intentions on the part of Britain, should her arms reduce them to obedience, it was judged highly proper to contradict them in a public and solemn manner. To this purpose a proclamation was issued by General Robertson, newly appointed Governor of the Province of New York, wherin he strove by a variety of arguments and motives, drawn up with equal strength and elegance of language, to convince the Colonists that the disadvantageous representations of the designs of Great Britain were suggested by the malice and interested views of ambitious and artful individuals, and that it was her sincere desire to compass a re-union of America by a liberal compliance with all the demands she could form for the security of her liberties.

But whatever pains were taken to induce the Americans to conceive more friendly ideas of the policy of Great Britain, those who took up the pen on the side of Congress, were no less industrious in describing the situation of Britain to be such, as to justify the persuasion of those who looked upon her as driven by her distresses to make the concessions she was holding forth to the Americans.

She was represented as standing alone, abandoned and unpitied by the world, left to suffer the punishment due to her avarice and her ambition, and pronounced entirely deserving of the calamities under which she laboured. Her memorials and remonstrances, which were formerly wont to command such respect and attention, were now treated with neglect and contempt, and exposed her to derision,

rision, from the inefficacy with which they were attended. The politics of Europe had united every Court against her ; they were either openly allied, or secretly confederated in the design of humbling her pride.

The interest of Europe was a tie that bound it indissolubly to America. From the north to the south of the European continent, every state conspired to deprive Great Britain of the monopoly she had so long enjoyed in her Colonies ; it was in vain she expostulated or menaced : nations were deaf to her expostulations, and despised her threats.

The strength exhibited by Britain in the struggle she still maintained, could not, in the nature of things, cope with that of her numerous enemies. Perseverance in the contest on their part, would finally compel her to submit to their terms, in spite of her haughtiness and obstinacy. It was not the success of a day, nor the transitory triumphs obtained by lucky accidents, that would enable her to overcome the potent combination of so many states. Allowing her courage and her skill to be ever so great, it was not reasonable to suppose that they were matchless and invincible. If nothing else availed, the very duration of the war would ruin her, through the weight of those taxes with which her exigencies would compel her to load her people, in order to maintain the unequal conflict against so many enemies, and she must unavoidably sink at last under such a multiplicity of pressures.

From this depiction of the state of Great Britain, it was inferred that it would be pusillanimity in the Americans to listen to those terms of accommodation with which she was perpetually amusing them. They were incompatible with their true interests, which consisted in maintaining a perfect neutrality respecting all nations, and in governing themselves at home according to their own systems, without

without suffering any shackles from the interference of a foreign authority.

Such was the substance of those many allegations urged with so much vehemence, and often with so much fury and indecency of language, against all offers of reconciliation on the part of Britain.

The various performances of this kind with which America abounded at this period, served not a little to keep alive the spirit of resistance and enmity to Great Britain. It was in a great measure owing to these, that the failure of their allies in compassing the great objects they had proposed, as well as their own disappointments, were viewed in the light of temporary evils, which patience and constancy in pursuing the measures they had adopted, would infallibly put a period to; as notwithstanding the resolution of the enemy from whom they proceeded, the repetition of his efforts would of themselves waste his strength, and oblige him at last to abandon the contest, for want of means to prosecute it.

It could not, however, escape their observation, that in spite of difficulties and distresses, the same spirit animated the British nation as in the days of its greatest splendour. The unconquerable courage of her soldiers and seamen shone forth upon every occasion. Throughout the campaigns on the continent of America, no instance of the least defect of their ancient valour had happened among the British troops; whether they had been successful, or had failed in their endeavours, both officers and men had preserved their military character unspotted.

The same conduct had marked their naval officers and people. The French had, since their entering into the contest, vainly endeavoured to represent themselves as having had the superiority in some engagements, wherein the English had claimed

fuses. The description given of them by the latter, were so plain and intelligible, and carried so evident a face of truth, as to obtain credit with facility among the impartial and the intelligent; while the embarrassed and confused accounts given to the public by the French, were of themselves insufficient to invalidate their pretensions.

Various engagements had taken place at sea, between the English and the Americans. Several had been very remarkable for the courage and obstinacy exerted on both sides; but that which attracted most notice was between Captain Pearson of the Serapis, a large frigate accompanied with a smaller, and an American squadron, consisting of two ships of forty guns, one of thirty, and another of twelve, commanded by the celebrated Captain Paul Jones. After exchanging several broadsides, Captain Pearson's ship and that of Captain Jones, from the anchor of one hooking the quarter of the other, lay so close to each other, fore and aft, that the muzzles of their guns touched each others sides.

In this singular position they engaged full the space of two hours. During this time, the quality and variety of combustible matter thrown from the American ship into the Serapis, set her on fire no less than ten or twelve different times; and it was not extinguished without the greatest difficulty and exertion.

During this conflict of the two ships, another of equal force to the Serapis, kept constantly sailing round her, and raking her fore and aft in the most dreadful manner. Almost every man on the main and quarter deck was either killed or wounded. Unhappily for the Serapis, a hand grenade thrown from the enemy into one of her lower deck ports set a cartridge on fire: the flames catching from one cartridge to another, all the way aft, blew up the people

people that were quartered abaft the main-mast ; from which unfortunate circumstance all those guns were rendered useless for the remainder of the action.

After an hour and a half's fight, the people on board the American ship called out for quarter, and said they had struck : Captain Pearson hereupon called upon Captain Jones, to know whether he had struck or asked for quarter. No answer being returned, after repeating the question two or three times, Captain Pearson ordered his men to board the enemy : but on preparing to execute his orders, they perceived a superior number lying under cover, with pikes in their hands ready to receive them : hereupon they desisted and returned to their guns ; continuing the fight half an hour longer ; when the other ship coming across the stern of the Serapis, poured a whole broadside into her : her main mast went by the board, while from her position, she was not able to bring a single gun to bear upon that ship. Finding it impracticable to stand out any longer with the least prospect of success, the Serapis struck. Had it not been for the accident of the cartridges taking fire, and the consequences that ensued, there was no doubt the latter must have proved victorious, notwithstanding the great superiority of the enemy. The American ship was in the greatest distress : her lower deck quarters were drove in, and all her lower deck guns dismounted : she was on fire in two places, and had seven feet water in her hold. Her people were obliged to quit her and she sunk the next day. Out of three hundred and seventy-five men, which was her complement, three hundred were killed and wounded.

The other frigate that accompanied the Serapis shared the same fate ; being taken by one of greatly superior force, after a desperate resistance. Her Captain's

Captain's name was Piercy, and her own the Countess of Scarborough.

This action, though it terminated unsuccessfully to the two British ships, was of little advantage to the enemy. An excellent ship was lost, with a number of good hands; and the purpose of their cruise was totally defeated. The honour of the day was allowed to be on the side of Captain Pearson; whose conduct and valour were universally admired, and would in all likelihood have been crowned with success, but for the accident above-mentioned. It ought however to be acknowledged, that Captain Paul Jones displayed great personal bravery throughout the whole engagement, and fully maintained the reputation he had already acquired.

It was much about the same time that engagement took place between a French man of war of forty guns, and the Quebec frigate, wherein the sails of this latter taking fire from her guns, the flames communicated to the vessel itself, and occasioned her to blow up. Before this accident, the fight had been maintained with so much skill and courage by Captain Farmer, who commanded the Quebec, that no advantage had been gained by the enemy, notwithstanding his superior strength in number of guns and weight of metal. The combat began at nine in the morning, at yard-arm, and lasted till two in the afternoon: both ships were dismasted, and a terrible slaughter made, when the misfortune on board the Quebec put an end to the engagement. Captain Farmer perished with his vessel; out of which only thirty men were saved. These two engagements happened in the autumn of seventy-nine; the first off the coast of Yorkshire, the second off Ushant.

The many resolute exertions of this kind, which were frequent in the British navy, convinced the enemy

enemy how difficult a task it would prove to bring Great Britain to that state of depression which they had in contemplation; Instead of reducing the number of her ships and merchant-men, their own were daily diminished by the much more numerous captures made upon them by the British cruisers.

Such was the relative situation of both parties towards the close of the year seventy-nine, and the commencement of eighty. An unanswerable proof of the real superiority which Great Britain maintained at sea, was that, notwithstanding the vast appearance of strength displayed by her enemies, they were foiled in all their enterprises, and had been obliged to abandon the principal designs they had proposed to execute.

It was from the thorough persuasion of their inability to succeed without farther assistance, that they applied with so much earnestness to all the maritime powers in Europe for their interposition against Britain; and it was from the same conviction, together with their excessive jealousy of the ascendancy of Britain at sea, that these powers so readily coincided with the views of France and Spain, and united together under pretence of maintaining the freedom of trade and navigation.

C H A P. LV.

Siege of Gibraltar.—Losses at Sea.—Transactions in the West Indies, and in North America.

1780:

AMONG those motives that induced Spain to join the confederacy against Great Britain, was the long and earnestly cherished desire of recovering Gibraltar. The possession of this important fortress by a foreign power, was highly mortifying to the Spanish Court and nation. It was compared to the long retention of Calais by the English in former days, and the recovery of it was deemed as essential to the honour of the Spaniards, as that of Calais had been reputed by the French in regard to their own.

The principle plan of action was formed in conformity with this idea, which was warmly adopted throughout Spain, and served, in no small degree, to reconcile the people to a war which was in other respects so much against their real interests. As soon as the rupture with Britain was determined upon at Madrid, the Spanish Court gave immediate orders to General Mendoza, who commanded the forces in the vicinity of Gibraltar, to cut off all communication with that place, and to invest it in the closest manner possible.

While this General blockaded by land, Admiral Barcelo did the same by sea; but notwithstanding his superiority, the British ships of force then in the bay, exerted themselves with so much activity and spirit, as to elude his vigilance on numberless occasions. They took a variety of prizes, and fa-

voured the entrance of those many vessels, that brought provisions and necessaries to the garrison.

The victory obtained by Admiral Rodney, and the large supplies he had conveyed to the besieged, were an essential encouragement to them, as they now saw; that in cases of necessity, they might depend upon relief. This proved no little discouragement to the besiegers, from their losing the prospect they had formed of compelling the place to surrender through want of necessaries.

On the departure of Admiral Rodney, about the middle of February, a ship of seventy-four guns, another of sixty-four, two frigates of thirty, and two sloops, remained at Gibraltar. The garrison consisted of four colonels, nine lieutenant-colonels, seven majors, fifty-six captains, one hundred lieutenants, fifty-four ensigns, three hundred and forty serjeants, one hundred and seventy drummers, and five thousand men, rank and file: the artillery and artificers amounted to seven hundred.

The chief inconveniency under which the garrison laboured, was the frequent want of fresh provisions. It had hitherto been abundantly supplied from the coast of Barbary; but to whatever causes it might be owing, a surprising and unaccountable alteration had taken place in some of the states along that coast. The Emperor of Morocco, in particular, had transferred his friendship from Great Britain to Spain in a manner wholly unprecedented.—He espoused the cause of the latter with a zeal and partiality the more astonishing, as Britain had given him no provocation, and as the enmity subsisting for so many ages between the Spaniards and the Moors, was in a manner constitutional, and founded upon causes that could never cease to operate.

Such being unfortunately the disposition of these neighbours, the condition of the garrison became daily more distressful, from the necessity of making

use of their salt provisions with the strictest œconomy, and the very great difficulty of procuring fresh.

So great however were the industry and resolution of the British officers and seamen, that in spite of all obstructions, they frequently found means to procure the refreshments that were wanted, in doing which they were always exposed to great danger, from the strength and watchfulness of the enemy.

In the mean time the defence of the garrison was so vigorous, that while it continued to be supplied even in this scanty manner, the enemy began to lose all hope of reducing it. In order to deprive it of this support, they formed the project of burning all the British shipping in the bay of Gibraltar.

In the night of the sixth of June, eighty, favoured by an uncommon darkness, ten fire-ships stood over from the Spanish to the British side of the bay. The enemy's design was to set fire to the store-houses neareft the water-side, as well as to the shipping there, which was at this time considerable; but owing to their precipitation in firing their ships too soon, and to the heavy cannonade with which they were received, the attempt was frustrated.— To complete their destruction, all the boats belonging to the British ships were manned, and sent to grapple and tow them off. This service was performed with amazing intrepidity; every one of them being run ashore.

This was a grievous disappointment to the Spaniards. Expecting their scheme to take the fullest effect, the Spanish Admiral, Don Barcelo, lay ready with his squadron to intercept the British vessels that might attempt to escape; and the batteries at the enemy's lines were in readiness to bombard the town, had the fire-ships succeeded in causing any conflagration on shore.

The failure of this project was followed by the defeat of many others successively. As fast as the enemy pushed their works forwards, and constructed new batteries, they were constantly destroyed.—The mortification was the greater on these occasions, as they were usually permitted to complete their operations before the destruction of them took place. Thus the labours of many days were often lost in a few hours, and the whole to be recommenced with little more prospect of success.

One of the greatest annoyances, to which the garrison and shipping were equally exposed, were the Spanish gun-boats. They were vessels from thirty to forty tons burthen; they were constructed to lie low on the water, which rendered them difficult to aim at; they carried forty or fifty men, a large sail, and fifteen oars on a side, with a six and twenty pounder on the prow. From the facility of managing them, they were adapted to a multiplicity of uses, and in calm weather two of them were deemed a match for a moderate frigate. The want of some vessels of the same construction, subjected the people at Gibraltar to great inconveniences.

The obstinate resistance maintained by the garrison of this fortress, was very alarming to the Court of Spain, which had promised itself a speedy reduction of it, from the difficulty of supplying it with necessaries, in the midst of the impediments that must arise from the superiority acquired by the combination of the French and Spanish navies.—But experience was daily showing that this superiority had more of appearance than reality; and that notwithstanding the parade of numbers, the fleets of Great Britain still maintained the honour of their flag, and instead of remaining on the defensive, were busily occupied in attacking their enemies in every quarter.

Another

Another object of no less alarm was the feeble condition of the finances of both France and Spain, the latter especially. The treasure she had received from her American dominions, previous to her taking part with the former, had been exhausted by the vast expences she had incurred in order to make a figure in the confederacy corresponding with her dignity and importance. This treasure being the irregular produce of a revenue long in arrear, and not being succeeded by equal remittances, the projects to which it gave birth and support while it lasted, could not be pursued with the same vigour after it had been expended.

From the sanguine prospect that had been formed by the House of Bourbon of speedily accomplishing the designs they had in view, they had engaged in such a multiplicity of enterprizes, as demanded much larger sums to carry them into execution than they had imagined would be necessary. Relying upon a quicker termination of the contest than what they now experienced, their calculations had been framed according to this expectation, and, of consequence, fell short of what they found at present would be requisite to enable them to proceed.

In France it was foreseen, that the people at large coinciding with the measures of the Court in favour of America, the difficulty would, of course, be less in procuring pecuniary supplies from them than in Spain, where the nation was duly sensible that the humiliation of Great Britain, was by no means a desirable object to the Spanish monarchy; and that consanguinity excepted, the Court of France had no claims of amity upon that of Spain, which had already suffered sufficiently from so unpolitical an alliance.

The deficiency of the public funds was so great in this latter kingdom, that the government was

obliged to make application to the cities, towns, corporations, and all monied people, to relieve its exigencies. It was represented to them, that the public honour of the realm was at stake in the present contest with Great-Britain; and that it would be highly disgraceful to abandon a confederacy wherein its faith was solemnly engaged.

Through exhortations of this nature, and the deep-rooted attachment and veneration the Spaniards are known to profess for the persons of their kings, they concurred with great zeal in contributions for the service of the Crown. Immense sums were raised in this manner upon individuals of all orders and denominations. The Spanish clergy acted with uncommon liberality upon this occasion, and many of the principal dignitaries of the church set an example, which, in a country so much under ecclesiastic influence, was of universal efficacy.

This conformity with the views of the Court was the more remarkable, as the dispositions of the people in Spain began about this time to be more favourable towards the British nation than had been customary among them. The kind treatment which their officers and other individuals continually met with from those of Great-Britain, whenever the chance of war threw them into their hands, had of late awakened a sense of esteem and benignity for these, which operated very powerfully in their behalf, and set them in the light of a generous and respectable enemy. Ideas of this kind, together with the conviction that Spain was acting against its interest in the prosecution of this war, wrought no small diminution in the warmth with which the community concurred in forwarding the views of their Sovereign.

In France itself, notwithstanding the revenue was upon a much more secure and advantageous footing, the necessities of the public were become so pressing,

pressing, that in order to avoid those discontents and murmurs that would follow from laying additional taxes upon a people already loaded as heavily as they could with patience bear, it was found indispensable to abolish a great number of places and offices in several public departments. This was deemed a severe enforcement of œconomy, as the abolition extended to no less than four hundred; but the times called so urgently for this sacrifice of private to public interest, that the feelings arising from the hard case of such a number of individuals, as were dismissed from their stations, were superseded by the consideration of the absolute necessity of the measure.

These retrenchments proved, however, unanswerably the streights to which the French ministry were reduced. Had other methods appeared practicable with any propriety at the present season, they would undoubtedly have been adopted in a state where the grandeur of the Crown, with the consequent support of all who contribute to its lustre, has always been the invariable object of those who were at the head of affairs. It is highly improbable, therefore, they would have departed from maxims long become fundamental in its very constitution, had they not been compelled to it by the circumstances of the times.

In this situation was the House of Bourbon at the commencement of the year eighty. Notwithstanding the misfortune that had befallen Spain in the capture and destruction of the squadron under Admiral Langara, it was judged incumbent on both kingdoms to preserve that appearance of strength which they had at first displayed. For this reason a junction was formed of the French and Spanish fleets, in the same manner as it had

taken place the preceding year, though with a ~~var~~ inferiority of force.

Great-Britain was taking measures, on the other hand, to face the combined fleets. Admiral Geary, a very brave and experienced officer, was now at the head of the British fleet, in the room of Sir Charles Hardy, who was lately dead. He sailed with thirty ships of the line in quest of the enemy, who were cruising on the coast of Portugal. In the beginning of July he fell in with a large number of merchantmen returning from the West Indies, of which a dozen were captured; the rest escaped, through the haziness of the weather.

The main body of the combined fleet was at this time spread over a vast extent of sea, in that tract usually held by the shipping bound to the East and West-Indies. A fleet for each of these destinations sailed from Portsmouth at the close of July. The ships bound to the East-Indies were five in number. They carried a large quantity of arms, ammunition, and artillery, for the use of the British forces, and of naval stores for the men of war on that station. Of those bound to the West-Indies, eighteen were vessels in the service of Government, laden with provisions and necessaries for the troops in those parts, together with recruits. The remainder were merchantmen. They were escorted by a ship of the line and three frigates.

In the night of the eighth of August, they happened to fall in with that division of the combined fleet which was commanded by the Spanish Admiral Don Louis de Cordova. Unfortunately mistaking his top lights for those of their own convoy, they bore after him, and did not discover their error till morning, when it was too late to rectify it. They were quickly environed by the enemy.

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The man of war and frigates escaped, with a few others; but the major part were taken, to the amount of above fifty, including the East-India-men.

The principal detriment occasioned by this capture was the loss of seamen and troops, and of the supplies that were so much needed in those places for which they were intended. The number of prisoners amounted to about two thousand seven hundred sailors and soldiers, near one hundred officers, and about two hundred passengers of both sexes.

The loss of so large and valuable a fleet, was a heavy blow in the midst of so many difficulties and trials of every denomination. The news of it was received with the highest discontent. Loud complaints were made of the imprudence of trusting such immense property to so flight a convoy, especially when the enemy was known to be on the watch. The course it had held was also represented as improper and rash; and those who had advised it were found the more culpable, as the end proposed by it, which was to take in wines at Madeira, was unworthy of being put into consideration with the certainty of the peril, and the importance of the other objects that were to be answered.

The dissatisfactions at home were farther increased by the melancholy reflection on that averseness to the service which kept some of the best officers in the navy unemployed at a time when their professional abilities were so much wanted. It was with much difficulty an officer could be found to supply the vacancy of Admiral Geary, on his resignation of the command in chief of the fleet. The great merit of Admiral Barrington, who had been his second, procured him the offer; but he declined it; generously, however, signifying his willingness to assist in the same rank as before. On his

his refusal, Admiral Darby was invested with the supreme command.

During these transactions in Europe, the French and Spanish commanders in America were exerting their whole power against the possessions of Great Britain in those parts. The success of the Spanish arms under General Galvez, in West Florida, induced him to renew his attempts in order to subdue the remainder of that province.

Notwithstanding the smallness of the force remaining to defend it, the vigorous resistance he had experienced in his former expedition, rendered him very cautious how he proceeded upon a second, till he had received such a reinforcement as would ensure the reduction he proposed.

Having collected all the strength of which he was master at New Orleans, he sailed from thence towards Mobile, the principal British settlement in West Florida next to Pensacola. It was at that time in a very feeble condition. The garrison of the fort, a place in no very great state of defence, consisted of about two hundred soldiers and sailors, and fifty of the inhabitants.

The passage of the Spanish forces from New Orleans was impeded by a variety of difficulties. The navigation along shore was tedious and intricate, from the perpetual shoals and shallows in their way, at the mouths of the many rivers that discharge themselves into that part of the Gulf of Mexico. They were assailed with frequent storms, by which the vessels were shattered, and several of them driven ashore; the people on board, to the number of eight hundred, narrowly escaping with their lives.

The intelligence of this disaster was highly exaggerated to the British troops and settlers; those who had been shipwrecked were represented as having utterly perished; and in consequence of this loss,

loss, they were told the enterprize had been wholly abandoned. This had the effect of diminishing the precautions that were taking against an attack.

The Spanish General, however, persevering in his design, had the good fortune to surmount all obstacles, and to effect his landing within a few miles of Mobile, with a considerable reinforcement of shipping, troops, military stores, and provisions.

Captain Durnford, of the corps of engineers, made the best defence which his circumstances would admit; but the enemy's batteries having made a breach fully practicable for an assault, as he saw they were preparing to make one immediately, and expected at the same time no relief, he judged it necessary to surrender the fort, together with the garrison, as prisoners of war. This event took place on the fourteenth of March, eighty.

The loss of this place, though of no great consideration, was attended with the more regret, as General Campbell, on the first information of the siege, hastened with all expedition to its assistance. His van was arrived within sight of the enemy at the very time the capitulation was signed, and they were preparing to take possession of the fort. But the Governor was totally unapprized of his approach: being an officer of known courage, it was not doubted he would have held out, at all hazards, had the least notice of this been conveyed to him.

While the Spanish arms were thus employed in West Florida, an expedition was projected and carried on from Jamaica, under the direction of General Dalling, to St. John's Fort, situated on the Mosquito shore. The officer entrusted with the command of the troops on this enterprize, was Captain Polson. Arriving at the river on which the fort was situated, he found as many obstructions to encounter from the unwholesomeness of the climate,

as from the resistance of the enemy. From the twentieth of March, when the British troops entered that river, to the thirtieth of April, when they took possession of the fort by capitulation, they endured every hardship accruing from the nature of a country peculiarly inimical to European constitutions, with little intermission from the most destructive labour in the prosecution of this arduous undertaking.

The fatigue they underwent was attended with particular discouragement, from the circumstances of the season. The rains, periodical in that part of the world were set in with their usual violence. In the intervals of their cessation, the intense heat of the sun occasioned such exhalations from the woods on the banks of the river, as were unsufferable, and rendered the rainy weather preferable to the fair.

From these causes the expedition was attended with a considerable loss of men, though it proved highly honourable to the British arms, from the resolution and perseverance with which the troops and seamen, in emulation of each other, overcame so many obstacles and hardships, and accomplished the design proposed.

During these operations on the southern continent, the hostilities which had been partly suspended, through the severity of the winter, in the northern parts of America, were now again resumed. While Sir Henry Clinton was on his return from Charlestown to New York, the commanders in that city, at the head of five or six thousand men, crossed over into the Province of Jersey, in hope of surprising some detached parts of the American army. Suspecting their design, the American militia assembled in great numbers, and way-laid them on their march, making occasional stands wherever the nature of the ground was favourable, and keeping

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a constant fire upon the troops from every quarter. They could not, however, prevent them from advancing into the country, as far as a settlement called the Connecticut Farms. Here the Americans took post in the houses, from whence they galled the troops on their march. The consequence was, that the troops, in order to dislodge them, set the houses on fire.

What rendered the destruction of this place the more remarkable, was the unhappy fate of a clergyman's lady, who was shot dead in her house.—As it could not be ascertained from which of the two parties this accident proceeded, they both charged each other with it. But however it may have happened, it proved a circumstance highly injurious to the British troops, from the conviction among their enemies that they were the perpetrators, and greatly contributed to encrease that odium in which they were held by the Americans.

In the mean time, a body of Continental regulars coming up to the support of the militia, they posted themselves at a bridge leading to the town of Springfield. Here a skirmish ensued, which lasted several hours. But the British commanders receiving intelligence that large detachments from the American army were in motion towards them, and that other troops were advancing from all sides, they thought it most advisable to retire, as the design of surprizing the enemy was thereby frustrated.

They were followed with great eagerness in their retreat, and a regiment which composed their rear-guard was attacked with great fury; but the enemy could make no impression upon it, and after a long contest, were compelled to give way with precipitation. These various skirmishes happened between the fifth and ninth of June, eighty.

As the British party was in possession of Elizabeth-town, on the Jersey shore, Sir Henry Clinton

ton, who was now returned, projected another attack upon Springfield. To this purpose, a feint was made by the shipping, of a design against the American posts on the North River, in order to draw the attention of General Washington to that side, and thereby make an effectual diversion in favour of the intended attack.

As soon as it was found that the feint had succeeded, and occasioned that General to move with all speed to the protection of his posts in the highlands, the British forces advanced immediately towards Springfield, intending to penetrate to those parts of Jersey where the stores and magazines of the Americans were lodged, in order to destroy them, and to occupy, if it were practicable, some of the strong holds where the enemy had so often retreated for security.

On the twenty-third of June, at five in the morning, the British party, in number about five thousand, besides a body of cavalry, and a train of artillery, marched from Elizabeth-town to Springfield. The force left by General Washington for the defence of that place, and of the passes in the mountains, at the foot of which it was situated, was commanded by General Greene, a very resolute and sagacious officer. The bridge leading to the town was guarded by a chosen body of marksmen, who maintained their post with great vigour and obstinacy. After a warm dispute, the bridge was carried, and the enemy compelled to retire to their main-body; but it was so strongly posted in the defiles and high grounds overlooking the post that had been forced, that it was judged inexpedient to attack them in such a situation. During the contest of this day, the town of Springfield was unhappily destroyed.

The impracticability of forcing the enemy in the strong fastnesses of which he was now possessed, induced the British forces to retire to their post at

at Elizabeth-town. They were closely followed; but their retreat was so compact and orderly, that the efforts made to annoy them were wholly fruitless.

In the mean time, as the attempts of the British army at New York had made no impression of any consequence, and each party continued on a footing of equality in the middle provinces, the Americans began to recover from the alarm which the loss of Charlestown had created. The intelligent among them were very industrious in pointing out the advantages resulting from that separation of the British forces which was necessarily occasioned by the expeditions now carried on in the southern provinces, a much greater facility was thereby acquired of frustrating the enterprizes of the army at New York, and the diminution of its numbers would open the way to a successful attack upon that city, as soon as the succours should arrive which had been solemnly promised, and were daily expected from France.

Warm exhortations were made on this occasion to the public by the Congress, and principal persons at the head of American affairs. They repeated the various arguments so often urged in favour of the independence they had so valiantly maintained, and called upon them, by every motive that could animate them, to act with spirit and promptitude against the designs of Great Britain.

In order to stimulate more effectually the exertions of all classes, and to procure them effectual encouragement, the leading men had recourse to two expedients, which proved of great utility.—The first was the opening of subscriptions for the relief of the private soldiers in the American army, and for an augmentation of their pay. This fund soon became the more considerable, as it was patronised in a distinguished and very liberal manner by General Washington's Lady, whose example was

was quickly followed by ample donations from all the women of rank in the United States.

The second was the institution of a bank at Philadelphia, the chief intent of which was to supply the army with all necessaries. To obtain cash the more readily, the managers of this bank were empowered to issue notes, and to borrow money at the rate of six per cent. to the lenders. The subscribers to the bank were ninety-seven in number, and their subscription amounted to the sum of three hundred and fifteen thousand pounds, Pennsylvania currency.

While the attention of Congress was taken up with these arrangements, the long expected succours arrived at length from France at Rhode Island, on the eleventh of July, eighty. They consisted of one ship of the line of eighty-four guns, and twelve hundred men; two of seventy-four, and seven hundred men; and four of sixty-four, and six hundred men. They were accompanied by four frigates, one of forty and three of thirty-six guns, besides armed vessels and transports, on board of which were five regiments of the best troops on the French establishment, with a battalion of artillery.

This squadron was commanded by the Chevalier de Ternay, well known by his expedition to Newfoundland, at the close of the preceding war. The land-forces were under the Count de Rochambeau, a Lieutenant-General.

These succours, which were a convincing proof that France meant to assist them in the most effectual manner, revived the hopes of the Americans in the highest degree. They now considered themselves as completely relieved from all future apprehensions on the part of Great Britain, and began to look forward to a speedy and total deliverance from the calamities they had endured, by an entire expulsion of the British armies from the continent of America.

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The people of Rhode Island gave the French the kindest reception they were able. They congratulated their commander in the warmest terms of attachment and respect for the monarch and the nation that had sent him to their assistance. The answer they received was no less acceptable. They were told that what they had seen was only the vanguard of a far greater force destined for their aid. As a particular motive of satisfaction, they were informed the French troops should act under the orders of General Washington, and observe the strictest discipline.

The arrival of the French succours occasioned a remarkable circumstance in General Washington's camp.—Hitherto the Americans had worn blue cockades; they were now directed to wear black and white intermixed, by way of denoting the unanimity subsisting between the French and American nations.

The French Admiral, Monsieur de Ternay, being apprized of the small naval force at New York under Admiral Arbuthnot, consisting only of four ships of the line, prepared directly to attack it; but when he was on the point of sailing, he was informed that a reinforcement of six sail of the line was arrived at that place. This at once broke the measures he had planned, and the Americans had the mortification of seeing him blocked up by the British fleet.

To second the measures of Admiral Arbuthnot, Sir Henry Clinton embarked a body of six thousand select troops, in order to make a descent on Rhode Island. But on receiving intelligence of this motion, General Washington marched from his encampment towards New York, with a resolution to attack it in Sir Henry Clinton's absence. Preparations were made for this purpose, and the American army was reinforced from all quarters, in ex-

pectation of its taking place. But on a close inspection and consideration of the strength now stationed at Rhode Island, the enterprize was laid aside, as highly unadvisable. Upwards of twelve thousand American troops had joined the French; and every place in Rhode Island, where a ~~descent~~ was practicable, had been fortified in such a manner, as to render an attempt of that nature too dangerous to be undertaken with so small a force as that which had been proposed.

During these transactions, a feat of bravery was performed which reflected the highest honour on those who were concerned in it. A body of American Refugees, to the number of about seventy, had taken post on the shore of the North River, opposite to New York. They had erected a block-house, to secure themselves from any sudden incursions of the enemy.

A corps of near two thousand Americans, headed by General Wayne, made an attack upon them, with seven pieces of cannon. Notwithstanding a cannonade of three hours, almost every shot of which penetrated through the block-house, and an attempt to carry the place by assault, they were repulsed, with the loss of many killed and wounded. On their retreat they were pursued; their stragglers were seized, and the cattle retaken of which they had plundered the neighbourhood.

While France was sending succours to America, Spain was exerting itself in order to give a decided superiority to the House of Bourbon in the West Indies. Towards the close of April eighty, a squadron of twelve sail of the line, commanded by Don Joseph Solano, a very brave officer, sailed from Cadiz, with above eighty transports, on board of which were embarked near twelve thousand men.

This great land force was intended for an invasion of the island of Jamaica; previous to which at-

tempt the men of war had orders to join the French fleet, and assist in attacking the British naval force in the West Indies.

On the Spanish squadron's approach to these latitudes, Admiral Rodney, to whom intelligence of it had been conveyed, put to sea from Barbadoes, where he was refitting his fleet, and taking in water and provisions, in order to intercept the Spaniards before they could effect a junction with the French.

But the Spanish commander, unwilling to commit the charge he was entrusted with to any danger, as soon as he drew near to the islands, dispatched a swift sailing vessel to Martinico, to inform M. de Guichen of his arrival, and to request he would join him with all speed.

The French Admiral's fleet had been so shattered in the late engagements with Sir George Rodney, that he had no more than eighteen ships in readiness for service. He sailed with these to the assistance of Don Solano, whom he found at Dominico. The combined fleets on their junction amounted to thirty-six ships of the line.

With this naval strength, and the formidable land force that accompanied it, it was much to be apprehended, that notwithstanding the valour and skill of the British officers and seamen, their inferiority of force, must have given way, and the enemy have proved irresistible. Fortunately for Britain, her people were not put to the severe trial that was expected.

The multitudes with which the Spanish transports were crowded, consisting of men quite unused to the sea, as well as to the climate, and manner of living to which they were now compelled, complaints and disorders broke out among them, which quickly became contagious, and of so malignant a nature, as to carry off vast numbers. They were obliged to put ashore at Dominico twelve hundred

of their sick, and as many more at Guadaloupe and Martinico. The infection spread to the French fleet and forces, among whom it caused a considerable mortality. To this diminution of their strength it was owing that they did not think it advisable to attempt the execution of the commissions with which they were charged.

After tarrying some time at the French islands, the Spanish Admiral proceeded to Hispaniola, whither he was attended by Monsieur de Guichen, and from thence to the Havannah, in order to refit his ships and refresh his men.

Thus ended, for the present, the projects concerted between the French and Spaniards against the British islands. The disappointment was the greater, as the French had made considerable preparations to this intent, and were not wanting to complain, that notwithstanding the losses incurred through illness, the Spaniards were not so deficient in numbers as to justify their abandoning the designs upon which they were sent. Through surmises of this kind, no small discontents arose among the French, and they began to look upon the Spaniards as too dilatory an ally to co-operate effectually against so resolute and active an enemy as the English.

In the mean time, Sir George Rodney lay with his fleet at St. Lucia, from whence he kept a watchful eye on the enemy's motions; intending, should they proceed to attack any of the islands, to throw every impediment in their way which his situation would admit. Here he was joined by Commodore Walsingham, with some ships of the line from England, and troops for Jamaica. On the departure of the French and Spanish fleets from Martinico, he followed them immediately with all the ships under his command, till finding they had no intentions against Jamaica, he returned to his former station, after dispatching ten sail of the line for the protection

tion of that island, together with the troops destined for that purpose.

The first part of the plan concerted between the Courts of Versailles and Madrid being frustrated, the second still remained undecided. Notwithstanding the failure of the former, it seemed to stand a fair chance of being carried into execution. The inaction that had, through various accidents, attended the French and Spanish forces in the West Indies, was not apprehended in North America, where no causes of the same nature were likely to operate.

This latter part of the scheme consisted in a vigorous attack on the British fleet and army at New York, by the united forces of France and America. The troops under Count de Rochambeau were to form a junction with those under General Washington, whose army was now increased to twenty thousand men, from the eagerness with which it had been reinforced by recruits and volunteers from all parts. The squadron under the Chevalier de Ternay, was to be joined by the fleet commanded by Count de Guichen. Thus the combined army of France and America would amount to near thirty thousand regulars, and the naval force to upwards of thirty sail of the line; a strength which that of Great Britain on the American continent would not be able to counteract, as it was too far divided and scattered to be collected in sufficient time for resistance.

Exclusive of this general plan, an expedition was intended against Canada, which was to be conducted by the Marquis de la Fayette. A body of near ten thousand men was assigned to this undertaking, and actually on their march towards that province.— An address to the French inhabitants was also framed by that nobleman upon this occasion: they were reminded in the strongest and most cogent

terms of their origin, and the natural motives that called upon them to join a people in alliance with their mother country. They were severely threatened, if they refused to unite with them, and should oppose the progress of the American arms.

In order to encourage their own people, and impress at the same time their allies and well-wishers with a great opinion of their internal strength, a list of the American forces was published by the authority of Congress. It entered into a very minute and particular detail of every circumstance that could give it authenticity and full credit. The numbers of men in every regiment, the names of their colonels, the places where they were stationed, were all carefully specified. By this list it appeared that the American army consisted of one hundred and forty-eight regiments of infantry, amounting to one hundred and fifteen thousand men; nine regiments of artillery, making three thousand; three regiments of hussars, near two thousand; and the same number of horse and dragoons. Besides these, which were regular troops in constant pay, the numbers of the militia in the several provinces were little less than four hundred thousand. The fact was respecting these latter, that almost every fencible man throughout the continent was included in the list.

In addition to these preparations and display of strength, they had recourse to those other methods which they had always found of essential efficacy on critical emergencies; these were exhortations and remonstrances to the public on the duty and the necessity incumbent upon them, to act with spirit and fortitude in order to surmount the difficulties of their situation.

The address that was penned upon this occasion by the supreme executive council of Pennsylvania, was remarkably warm and animated, and was circu-

circulated throughout the continent with prodigious effect. It represented with great fervour the opportunity now offered, by a concurrence of auspicious circumstances, of putting a decisive period to the war, by a vigorous exertion of their united strength. It pointed out the various circumstances that made success probable ; it laid before them the danger of letting so favourable an opportunity escape, and reminded them of the sufferings they had undergone in support of a cause which it was now in their power to render completely victorious.

Such, indeed, was the universal persuasion of the Americans, when, to their utter astonishment, intelligence came that Count de Guichen was sailed for France. That commander, however he might be desirous to co-operate in an enterprize from which so much glory, in case of success, would have accrued, was not in circumstances to bear any part in it. His fleet was in so disabled a condition, from his repeated engagements with Admiral Rodney, and his people so sickly, that he found it absolutely necessary to give up this project, and to return to France with all the speed he was able.

He sailed accordingly from the West Indies with a large fleet of merchant-men under his convoy.— The consciousness of the weak state of his ships, induced him to steer for Cadiz, to avoid meeting with the British fleet. On his arrival at that port, at the end of October, he was joined by Count D'Estaing with eighteen sail of the line. He brought the same number with him ; but though their united force now consisted of thirty-six line of battle ships, they did not think it safe to put to sea without further reinforcements. For that reason a numerous squadron of Spanish men of war accompanied them to the latitude of Cape Finisterre.

The British fleet was at this time cruising in the Bay of Biscay, under Admiral Darby. It was so

inferior in point of numbers to that of the enemy, that being wholly unapprized of the feeble condition of their shipping, it was judged unadvisable to attack them. It kept, however, constantly in their sight, watching all their motions, and determined to make the most resolute defence if attacked.— This conduct did the highest honour to the nation throughout all Europe, as it proceeded uncontestedly from the greatness of its courage and spirit, the commanders being entirely ignorant of the real circumstances of the enemy.

As soon as Admiral Rodney was informed of M. de Guichen's departure from his station at Hispaniola, conjecturing that his destination was for New York, he set sail directly for that place with eleven of his best ships, and arrived there about the middle of September.

Previous to his arrival, Admirals Arbuthnot and Graves had kept so vigilant an eye on the French squadron in Rhode Island, that it had not dared to venture out of that harbour. The French forces stationed there were now wholly occupied in strengthening the island, and preparing to defend themselves, instead of executing any offensive operations.

Other discouraging events had also taken place; seven large American privateers, and a French frigate, had been brought into New York, besides a number of other captures.

The arrival of so strong a reinforcement to the British naval power, was an object of equal surprize and concern to the Americans. It renewed the disappointment they had felt on the failure of the expectations they had formed from the Count de Guichen. They now saw a total defeat of the scheme upon which they had founded the completion of all their hopes. What alarmed them still more, they foresaw little probability that so auspicious an op-

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Portunity would ever befall them as that which they had expected. They were now experimentally convinced that it depended upon the concurrence of too many fortuitous circumstances to be relied upon.

Such a repetition of disappointments from the same quarter, could not fail to bring the alliance with the French into much disrepute. Instead of that expeditious ruin which they were continually threatening to the British affairs in North America and the West Indies, they had succeeded in neither. Their fleets, though superior in numbers, seemed to make it their business to act on the defensive; and on the continent they had been foiled in the only attempt they had made in favour of the Americans.

C H A P. LVI.

*Transactions in the Neighbourhood of New York.—
Operations of the Forces under Lord Cornwallis.*

1780.

THE duration of the American war was now become equally a cause of discontent to both the parties principally concerned. Five years of toil and suffering were now elapsed, without producing any well-founded hope of seeing a speedy termination of this destructive quarrel. Notwithstanding the fair expectations arising from the several untoward events that had befallen the British arms, still the contest continued, on their part, with unabated spirit, and with no small degree of success. The constancy of the Americans, on the other side, was no less remarkable, in submitting to the various hardships they had undergone. It was in every respect a reciprocal trial of courage and perseverance; and was by both parties carried on with a degree of resolution and obstinacy adequate to its importance.

The accession of France and Spain to the cause of America, had, to the astonishment of the world, produced nothing decisive. The exertions of Great Britain had, on the contrary, been such as to meet their attacks in every quarter on a footing of equality, and to keep the fortune of war in a state of suspense that was little expected from either friend or foe.

In this uncertain situation of public affairs, the attention of all parties was suddenly taken up by one of those singular events which are not unusually

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the result of uncommon occurrences in the course of human affairs.

General Arnold, whose eminent services to the Americans, and great military talents, had procured him so much reputation, had been appointed Governor of Philadelphia, on the evacuation of that city by the British army, in the summer of seventy-eight. His conduct in that station was made a subject of severe censure, and he had the misfortune to incur the ill-will of several persons, who represented him in very injurious colours.

The commissioners who were appointed to examine the accounts on which the complaints against him were founded, having rejected several of the charges and demands they contained, he had applied to Congress for a revision; but the committee whom they deputed for this purpose, having approved the rejections of the commissioners, the General was highly incensed, and expressed his dissatisfaction in terms that proved extremely offensive to Congress, and laid him open to much enmity and resentment.

A court-martial was held in consequence of the complaints brought against him; the result of which was, a reprobation of his conduct, conceived in general terms, and an order that he should be reprimanded by General Washington. His enemies, however, were not satisfied with this sentence, which they said was dictated by a regard for his former services.

General Arnold vindicated himself, on the other hand, with the greatest warmth. Conscious of the importance of what he had done for his country, he considered himself as ill repaid, and openly declared that he had been treated with injustice and ingratitude,

His enemies, however, were no less eager in disparaging him. They succeeded so far as to diminish in

in a great measure the vast popularity he had so justly acquired. This was a loss he felt most heavily, and complained of with much bitterness.

Such was the situation of General Arnold when the failure of the expectations held out on the part of France, brought about an alteration of circumstances in General Washington's army, which induced him to have recourse to every expedient, in order to supply the defection of those numbers that left him upon this occasion. The most obvious one was to call in the assistance of those upon whose abilities he could best rely in this arduous conjuncture. Among these none held a higher rank than General Arnold. He was accordingly called forth, and employed in the command of a post of the greatest importance, that of West Point, on the North River, where a very considerable division of the American forces was placed under his orders.

It was in this position that General Arnold took the determination to abandon the service of Congress, and to deliver up the post he commanded to Sir Henry Clinton. To this purpose a negociation was entered into with the British General, which was carried on with great circumspection and secrecy.

As the time of executing the project in agitation drew near, it was judged proper that an interview should previously take place between General Arnold and some person in whose honour and fidelity the fullest confidence could be deposited, in order to conclude upon the final arrangements. On this dangerous and trying occasion, choice was made of Major André, Adjutant-General of the British army, an officer who stood high in the esteem of Sir Henry Clinton, and whose professional merit, and various accomplishments, had at an early period of life recommended him to universal notice and respect.

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Under an assumed name, he privately repaired to General Arnold; from whom having received such communication and papers as related to the business on which he came, he set out upon his return, but was intercepted on the way, and all his papers seized.

Information of this was conveyed to General Arnold time enough to enable him to provide for his own safety; but Major André was brought before a board of general officers, for an examination of his case. After a minute investigation of every circumstance relative to it, he was adjudged a spy, and sentenced to death.

The behaviour of Major André, on his examination, was intrepid and magnanimous in a degree that struck the board with the utmost astonishment and admiration. He used no arguments or endeavours to palliate the facts that were stated against him, but frankly acknowledged every circumstance as it had happened.

Every effort was made by Sir Henry Clinton in order to save the life of so brave and valuable an officer. All the expostulations and reasonings were used that could be adapted to the occasion, and every motive urged in order to prevail upon General Washington to remit the sentence that had been pronounced upon him. But it was deemed necessary by the Americans to adhere to the rigid maxims of war, and all intercessions or remonstrances in his behalf were equally vain.

He met his severe destiny with a courage and manliness of behaviour that deeply affected all who were witnesses of it. Though engaged in a transaction, which, had it succeeded, would probably have brought instant ruin upon the enemy, such was the impression which his character made upon them, that they universally lamented his fate.—The officers who had signed his condemnation, and even

even General Washington testified the sincerest grief at the necessity they declared themselves under of complying with the rigorous usage established in such cases, and could not refrain from tears when the sentence was carried into execution.

In the mean time, General Arnold, on his arrival at New York, was promoted to the same rank in the British, which he had held in the American army, and employed in forming a body of his countrymen to act under his own command. He published an address to the inhabitants of the Colonies, wherein he described with great force the various hardships and miseries under which they laboured; exhorting them, from a multiplicity of motives, to renounce their adherence to Congress, and return to their former union with Britain. He entered into a circumstantial detail and justification of his conduct, reprobating that of Congress in the severest terms, and representing that body as wholly devoted to France, from views of private interest. He invited those Americans who were desirous of putting an end to the calamities of their country, to join the standard of Britain, promising them the same pay and treatment as the British troops.

The representation of the circumstances of America at that time, as contained in General Arnold's address, was strictly consistent with truth. The distresses which prevailed in the several provinces were such, as nothing but an invincible determination to suffer all extremities rather than submit, could have enabled the people to have borne with any patience. The total stagnation of trade, the deprivation of the usual comforts and conveniences, and the exorbitant price of the common necessaries of life, were the loud and encreasing complaint in almost every part of the continent. But that grievance which oppressed them most, and was indeed the foundation of all others, was the prodigious depre-

depreciation of their paper currency ; it was now fallen one hundred below par, and was daily sinking lower.

Under these accumulated loads and pressures of all denominations, the constancy and perseverance of the Americans was an object of no little surprise. It was especially in their army these hardships were severely felt ; their officers, in particular, were reduced to such mortifying straits, that it was with difficulty they were prevailed upon to continue their services. Numbers had determined to resign their commissions, and resume the care of their domestic concerns, as the only means of preventing the absolute ruin of their families.

The fact was, that provisions were the only article with a sufficiency of which Congress was able to supply their forces ; but, food excepted, the want of every other necessary was felt in a very extensive degree. But the distress fell chiefly upon the officers, who, in order to maintain a decency of appearance suitable to their rank, were obliged to raise money at a great loss.

Frequent applications were made by them to Congress, and to those states of which they were the immediate dependents. But notwithstanding they were continually promised redress, they saw no prospect of any alleviation to their sufferings.— They bore them, however, with exemplary patience ; and were never tempted by the length of its trial, to have recourse to any other means of remedy, than solicitations founded on the justest reasons and remonstrances conceived in the most decent terms. This was the more worthy of remark, as they had precedents before them in the military records of other countries, which might have induced them to act in a very different manner, had they not been swayed by an uncommon attachment to the cause which they had embraced, and resolved

to support it to the last, whatever the consequences might be.

In the mean time, fresh efforts were used to improve the good fortune which Congress had experienced in avoiding the destruction into which they were so near falling. The tardiness of the several component parts of the American union in furnishing their respective contingents, was the fundamental cause of the difficulties to which their armies were reduced. Great endeavours were made to bring them into a more punctual compliance with the requisitions of Congress in these matters; but the general derangement of their finances throughout the continent, was an insuperable bar to all designs of this nature.

In addition to these difficulties, another intervened, which aggravated all others, and occasioned an event which threw the whole continent into the greatest alarm.

As the term of enlistment was near expiring with numbers of those who composed the principal army, the provinces were summoned, of course, to send their proportion of recruits. But from whatever cause it might proceed, several of them were deficient in their quotas. This excited the greatest dissatisfaction, as the soldiers whose time of serving was completed, could not obtain the discharge to which they were entitled for want of others to replace them.

This happening at the close of the year, was rendered the more intolerable on account of the severity of the season, and the want of cloathing. The complaints of the soldiery were the louder, as they were informed that a sufficient quantity had long since been purchased, and lay ready for them, both in France and the West Indies, and that their not receiving it was owing to mere neglect.

Incensed

Incensed at so long a continuation of hardships, a considerable body of the army determined to leave the service, until their grievances were fully redressed. This body consisted of thirteen hundred men belonging to the Pennsylvania line. They demanded the full arrears of their pay, cloathing, and provisions. They had received none of the two first, and but part of the last. Some of their officers endeavouring to quell the insurrection, a riot ensued, in which four of these were wounded, and one killed.

The whole body then formed, and marched off with the baggage, artillery, and provisions belonging to the corps. They were again entreated to desist, and return to their duty; but no remonstrances could prevail. They continued their march till the evening, when they encamped in an advantageous position. Here they chose officers out of their own body, and elected commander in chief a serjeant-major, who had formerly been a soldier in the British army, giving him the title of major-general.

After three days march, they fixed their quarters at Prince-town, in the Jerseys. Here a flag of truce followed them; but the only answer they would give to the messages that were sent, was that they had served beyond their time, and insisted on the arrears due to them, before they would serve any longer.

On receiving intelligence of this mutiny in the American army, Sir Henry Clinton lost no time in his endeavours to derive that utility from it which it seemed to promise. Three of their countrymen in the British interest, were dispatched to treat with them upon this occasion. The proposals made to them were highly advantageous: they were, on returning to the obedience of the British government, to enjoy its protection, and receive the full amount

of what was due to them from Congress; such as were willing to enter into the British service, should be entertained on the same footing as the other troops; but they were left at liberty in this matter, and the only condition required of them was to lay down their arms, and bear them no more against Great Britain.

After making these proposals, and accompanying them with various motives to induce them to compliance, Sir Henry Clinton made several movements, and stationed his troops in such a manner, as to be in readiness to support the insurgents; in case they should come into his measures.

But it was soon discovered that all his endeavours were vain. Notwithstanding their discontents, the mutineers still continued immovable in their adherence to the cause of America. In order to show at once that their intentions were by no means hostile to it, they removed from their quarters at Prince-town to Trenton, on the Delaware, no great distance from Philadelphia.

A mutiny pregnant with so much danger, could not fail greatly to alarm the Congress, and all its friends. The executive council of Pennsylvania addressed a letter to the insurgents, promising them in the most solemn manner, a redress of every grievance they complained of, and an immediate gratification of every request that could be complied with.

A favourable answer being returned by the insurgents, a committee, consisting of several members of the Congress, was appointed to meet and confer with them at Trenton, where all matters were accordingly settled to their entire satisfaction. As a proof that they had not swerved from their fidelity, notwithstanding the tempting offers that had been laid before them by the British commander, they delivered up the agents that had been employed

employed by him to that purpose, who were immediately ordered for execution.

The insurrection of the Pennsylvania line, was followed by that of the New Jersey, which was pacified in the same manner. Nor did that part of the American army which was under the immediate command of General Washington himself escape the contagion. Having the same pretensions, it was hourly expected that it would make the same demands. In such critical circumstances, he remained in his quarters, without indicating the least intent of moving from them on any pretext. His presence, and the respect and affection for his person, though it could not prevent murmurs and dissatisfaction, contained the soldiery within bounds, and prevented them from imitating the example of the rest.

The most striking circumstance throughout all this transaction, was the inflexible aversion shown by the American soldiers to admit of any interference in their behalf on the part of those they deemed the enemies of their country. It reflected the highest honour on their character, and proved, that however their motives might be erroneous, still they acted upon principle.

The same instance of integrity had happened in the case of the unfortunate Major André: his captors were three common soldiers of the country militia, whom no promises nor allurements could induce to release him.

These proofs of attachment to their party among those who constituted the bulk of the people, were adduced, both in England and in America, as strong evidence that it was vain to rely on the dispositions of the multitude at large as friendly to the cause of Britain. Wherever the experiment had been tried, it had constantly failed. Doubtless Britain had many friends among the Colonists, but the number,

though great in itself, was small in comparison of its enemies. This opinion, though strongly combated by the Loyalists in America, and by those who embraced the ministerial side in England, began to gain ground in both countries more powerfully than ever, and to place the continuation of the contest on the part of Britain, in a very unfavourable point of view.

During these various proceedings, the British arms in the Southern Colonies of the American continent, had met with many vicissitudes of good and ill success. The unwholesomeness of the season that followed the battle of Camden, was the cause of long inaction, and proved at the same time no less inimical to the troops than hostilities themselves.

Lord Cornwallis employed this interval in settling the government, and making further arrangements in South Carolina for the suppression of attempts on the part of the disaffected. The estates of such as had joined the enemy, and opposed the British government, were sequestrated by proclamation.

As the enemy was assembling on the borders of North Carolina, he judged it expedient to send a detachment thither, in order to watch their motions, and counteract them, and to encourage the Loyalists, who were numerous in that quarter, to hold themselves in readiness to join him, as soon as the season would permit him to direct his march to that province.

The officer who commanded the detachment was Colonel Ferguson, a man of uncommon abilities in those military operations that tend to distress and harass the enemy, by intercepting convoys, surprizing parties, and making sudden attacks and incursions. His expertness, as a marksman, was unrivalled. It was happy for General Washington that his person was unknown to the Colonel, who

was more than once near enough to have singled him out. He used, it is said, upon these occasions, a musket of his own invention, contrived with peculiar art for sure and expeditious firing.

In pursuance of the orders he had received from Lord Cornwallis, he repaired to the frontiers of North Carolina, at the head of a body of light infantry, consisting of men trained under his own direction. He placed himself in such a manner, as to waylay a corps of Americans who were on their march to join a larger body.

In the mean time, the Provincial troops were collecting from various quarters. They formed, upon their junction, a force much superior to that of the Colonel, who upon discovering their strength and intent, thought it advisable to retreat. But as they were excellently mounted, they overtook him. Finding that an engagement was unavoidable, he posted himself advantageously on a high ground, called the King's Mountain, where he waited the approach of the enemy.

They came up with him about four in the afternoon, upon the seventh of October. Their superiority in number enabled them to surround and attack him on all sides. After an action that lasted near two hours, he was slain, and his troops, after a very brave resistance, were totally defeated. The loss in killed and wounded amounted to upwards of three hundred; four hundred were made prisoners, and very few escaped.

This was a severe blow, both from the loss of men, and of so excellent an officer. It elated the Americans in a very uncommon manner.—They had been of late under great despondency, from the repeated checks they had received in those parts, but this sudden turn of fortune seemed to promise a change in their affairs.

Encouraged by this success, they began soon after to form further projects for the total expul-

tion of the British forces from these parts. General Sumpter, one of their most active officers, having assembled a considerable body of men, proceeded towards the British posts in the upper country of South Carolina, with an intent to surprize them.—On receiving intelligence of his march, Lord Cornwallis sent orders to Colonel Tarleton to hasten with all expedition to their relief.

The Colonel was at this time at such a distance from the enemy, that they did not imagine it was in his power to arrive in time to prevent them from executing their designs. But so great was his diligence, that he penetrated through a large extent of country, in which he had several deep and broad rivers to cross, and almost came up with General Sumpter before he was apprized of his motions.—The American General was preparing to pass the river Ennoree, when he was informed of Colonel Tarleton's approach. He had hardly time to convey his main-body to the other side; but his rearguard could not escape, every man being either killed or taken.

He fled with the utmost precipitation.—But Colonel Tarleton pursued him with such rapidity, that he found it necessary to halt on the banks of the Tyger, not daring to cross it with the British troops pressing on his rear. He was partly induced to make a stand by the information that Colonel Tarleton, in the eagerness of his pursuit, had left his infantry some miles behind, and that the whole force with him did not amount to three hundred men.

Not doubting to put this handful to the rout before it was joined by the main-body, he drew up his own party, consisting of more than a thousand men, on a very advantageous ground; but Colonel Tarleton, notwithstanding his inferiority, attacked him, without waiting for the coming up of his people,

ple, with such astonishing vigour, that his party was broken, and compelled to cross the river in the utmost confusion.

In this engagement the Americans lost a considerable number of men: three of their Colonels were killed, and General Sumpter himself was dangerously wounded. They were closely pursued over the river, and their whole body was either destroyed or dispersed.

The success of this day added greatly to the reputation of the British arms, and struck no small damp upon the enemy. The circumstances of the engagement were singular in every respect. A thousand men, well armed, posted on a strong ground, and covered by several log-houses, had been defeated by a body of no more than one hundred and ninety horse, and eighty foot, without the assistance of any artillery.

In order to forward the operations of Lord Cornwallis, by cutting off the communication between the middle and the southern provinces, a corps of three thousand choice troops were dispatched under the command of General Leslie, to the Chesapeake, with orders to occupy those places in its neighbourhood, that were most convenient to intercept any succours that might be on their way to the Carolinas.

The troops sent upon this expedition landed accordingly in several places in Virginia, where they seized or destroyed a considerable quantity of merchandise and stores, and made prizes of a great number of vessels in the various rivers and harbours. But Lord Cornwallis being apprized the intention of Sir Henry Clinton was, that this reinforcement should act entirely according to his orders, directed General Leslie to repair forthwith to Charlestown, and to join him with all speed with one half of his force, leaving the other for the

guard of that town, and the security of the intermediate posts between it and the army under his command.

This accession of strength enabled Lord Cornwallis to make suitable preparations to penetrate into North Carolina towards the close of the year, which was the most favourable season for military operations.

The arrival of this reinforcement, and the plan proposed by Lord Cornwallis, were the more alarming to Congress, as they were not in condition to provide a sufficient force at the present time to oppose him, from the multiplicity of difficulties they had to encounter in a nearer quarter.

The earnest desire of General Arnold to signalise his return to the cause and standard of Britain, induced Sir Henry Clinton to place him at the head of a considerable detachment, with which he was commissioned to make a descent in Virginia. He sailed accordingly from New York with a strong convoy, and landing on the coast along the Chesapeake, did immense damage to the enemy in all those parts.

The prodigious destruction of military stores, and of merchandise, upon this occasion, and the defeat of several bodies of men, together with the apprehension of still worse consequences, obliged General Washington to dispatch two thousand of his best troops to the assistance of the people of Virginia, to which the Count de Rochambeau promised to add an equal number of French. The Marquis de la Fayette was appointed to the command of this force.

The French squadron was also to co-operate.— It had lately suffered great losses. Three ships of sixty-four guns, detached from Rhode Island, in order to intercept some store-ships going from New York to Charlestown, failed in their design; and on their

their return were cast away. Some of their largest frigates had shared the same fate; and the remainder was in danger of falling into the hands of Admiral Arbuthnot, when they were relieved from their fears by the arrival of a considerable reinforcement.

A violent storm happening at this time, wherein a British ship of seventy-four guns was lost, and another of the same force dismasted, the French squadron took this opportunity to sail from Rhode Island, intending to come upon the armament employed in Virginia, before the British squadron had sufficiently repaired the damages sustained in the preceding storm, to proceed to its assistance.

In full expectation of success, the French had already sent some ships of force to the Chesapeake, with a view of preventing the arrival of any transports with reinforcements to the British troops, and of obtaining an exact information of the respective situation of both parties. But hearing that several British ships were on their way to attack them, they withdrew with the utmost expedition. On their passage back to Rhode Island, they fell in with, and captured a British ship of forty-four guns.

In the mean time, as the alarm was daily increasing in Virginia, from the enterprising spirit and rapid movements of General Arnold, it was become necessary to make the quickest exertions in order to revive the courage of the Virginians. To this intent the French General, Count de Rochambeau, embarked with two thousand of his selectest men, and proceeded with the French squadron from Rhode Island on the eighth of March, eighty-one.

On intelligence of his departure, he was immediately followed by Admiral Arbuthnot, who overtook him off the Capes of Virginia on the sixteenth. The British line of battle consisted of one ship of ninety

ninety guns, three of seventy-four, and three of sixty-four. The French had two ships of eighty-four guns, two of seventy-four, and three of sixty-four.

An engagement now took place; in which the French, according to their usual system, avoided as much as possible to come into close action. As they kept aloof, only part of the British squadron could fetch them, which occasioned it to suffer much from the great superiority with which it had to contend: on the coming up of the remainder, the French were soon broken, and compelled to retire with all speed; but the detriment sustained by those ships that had borne the whole weight of their fire was such, that it was found impracticable to pursue them,

But notwithstanding the retreat of the French squadron rendered the victory incomplete, the advantages gained in other respects were very decisive. Admiral Arbuthnot had the satisfaction of frustrating the whole plan of operations formed by the French and Americans, respecting the ensuing campaign in Virginia. The Count de Rochambeau was compelled to return to Rhode Island, without daring to make the least attempt to land his troops; and those that were sent from General Washington's army, were blocked up by the British shipping at Annapolis, in Maryland, without being able to proceed to the intended relief of Virginia.

To the further mortification and alarm of the enemy, a strong reinforcement arrived from New York, under the command of General Philips, whose junction with General Arnold spread the greatest terror through the whole Province of Virginia.

Lord Cornwallis was at the same time preparing to force his way through North Carolina, and advancing at the head of a considerable force towards the

the frontiers of that province. The resources of the Congress were in such disorder at the commencement of this year, eighty-one, that they were not able to spare any of the troops belonging to the army in the vicinity of New York, for the relief of the Carolinas, and were compelled to leave them entirely to their own exertions.

In this difficult situation, General Washington was compelled to part with an officer of whose services he then stood in the highest need, and to send him with all expedition to assist them in opposing the progress of the British arms. This was General Greene; whom, next to himself, the Colonies considered as the ablest officer in the American army.

Arriving in North Carolina, he found Lord Cornwallis on his march to the borders of that province, and on the point of entering it. He made the utmost efforts to collect a sufficient force to obstruct his motions; but not finding himself in a condition to face him, he determined to make an attack upon some of the British posts in the upper part of the country, hoping by such means to oblige Lord Cornwallis to desist from his present design, in order to come to their relief.

The post which lay most open to an attempt was that called Ninety-six, which had been fortified, and well garrisoned; but which stood at such a distance from the main-body then with Lord Cornwallis, that General Greene thought it, for that reason, the properest object of an immediate attack.

In order to second the efforts of General Greene, he was attended by the most expert partisan among the Continentals: this was the celebrated Colonel Morgan; a man of the greatest personal bravery, and the most distinguished skill in that manner of fighting. He was in the American, what Colonel Ferguson had been in the British army, and had signalised

ised himself upon so many occasions, both against the Indians and the British troops, that he was become a most formidable and dangerous enemy.

While General Greene was occupied in attacking the post at Ninety-six, Colonel Morgan was employed in observing the motions of the British army. To this intent he fixed himself near the river Pacolet, with a body of rifle-men and of cavalry, and a number of militia.

Colonel Tarleton was at the same time advancing with all speed to the relief of Ninety-six. He had orders to clear that part of the country of the American parties that infested it, and especially of that under Colonel Morgan. Pursuant to these orders, he pressed him so vigorously, that he was obliged to retreat hastily before him, till he was arrested in his flight by the Broad River, so called from its immense breadth, and of which the waters were so much out by the late periodical falls of rain, that he found it utterly impassable in the presence of an enemy that was now close upon his rear.

In this extremity he resolved to post his men to the best advantage, and to put all his abilities to the test in the engagement which he now saw could no longer be avoided. He was convinced that were he defeated, his whole party must either be taken or destroyed; and he knew that the success of the campaign depended materially on its preservation. Animated by these motives, he made every disposition in his favour which the nature of the ground would admit. He formed his party in two divisions: the first, composed of militia, occupied the front of a wood; the second was drawn up in the wood itself, and consisted of his marksmen and best troops.

Colonel Tarleton, upon coming up with the enemy, drew up in two lines; his infantry in the center of each, and his cavalry on the flanks. He attacked

attacked and routed the militia that fronted him, pursuing them into the wood, whither they fled with the utmost precipitation.

This defeat and pursuit being what Colonel Morgan had expected, he had provided for it accordingly. On the first line giving way, he directed the second to open on the right and left, and extend along the wood. The way being thus cleared for those who fled, their pursuers were suffered to follow them till they were sufficiently entangled in the wood for the end proposed ; when on a signal given, they were assailed on both sides with the most dreadful discharge of rifle-pieces from behind the trees, almost every shot of which took effect. They were instantly thrown into the utmost disorder by this unexpected attack from an enemy they had not seen. Great part of the infantry was cut to pieces ; a regiment that was most forward in the pursuit, lost its colours by the fall of those who carried them ; and two pieces of cannon were taken, after a most obstinate and bloody resistance from the artillery company, who were all killed or wounded to a man, fighting in their defence.

Notwithstanding the day was lost, Colonel Tarleton exerted himself with so much resolution, that he found means, amidst the confusion attending the rout of his people, to rally numbers of his cavalry ; at the head of these he charged the enemy's horse, put them to flight, and recovered his baggage, which had been seized by a body of infantry, most of whom were slain upon the spot. This engagement happened on the seventeenth of February, eighty-one.

The ill fortune of this day was in many respects decisive of many subsequent events, and was heavily felt during the whole remainder of the campaign. It was in a manner a repetition of the disaster that had befallen the brave and unfortunate Colonel

nel Ferguson, with this only difference, that Colonel Tarleton escaped with life, and made a retreat.

Upon receiving intelligence of this defeat, a body of light troops was dispatched by Lord Cornwallis with the utmost expedition, in order to come up with Colonel Morgan, retake the prisoners he had made, and prevent his junction with General Greene; but so quick were the enemy's motions, that they could not be overtaken.

The other forces destined to join General Greene being now on their march from Virginia, it became an object of essential consequence to prevent them, as from their accession, his strength would be augmented to such a degree, as to be alarmingly superior to the army of Lord Cornwallis. To enable the British troops to march with the greater speed, a resolution was taken at the same time to destroy all the baggage that could not be secured, and that was deemed an unnecessary incumbrance on the army's motions. Nothing of consequence was reserved but what was indispensably requisite for the absolute subsistence of the troops. A few waggons only were kept for the accommodation of the sick and wounded, and the transportation of salt and ammunition. The casks containing wine and rum were all staved, and they set forwards with no other provision than as much flour as the men and some horses were able to carry.

The troops submitted to all these inconveniences with admirable temper and patience: they had before them indeed the example of their commander, who notwithstanding an ill state of health, cheerfully partook of all their hardships, and was no better provided for than the rest of his people.

At the head of a small, but brave and resolute army, prepared and determined to encounter all difficulties, Lord Cornwallis began his march towards the fords of the river Catawba. They were so vigilantly

gilantly guarded by the enemy, that he was obliged to move a great length of way towards its head before a passage could be found. Even here his motions were so closely watched, that he was compelled to make a variety of feints, in order to elude the attention of the enemy.

But they continued to observe his movements so unremittingly, that he was obliged to risk the passage at a ford five hundred yards wide, where the men waded through the water up to their middle, exposed to a heavy fire from the enemy posted on the other fide; but in spite of all obstacles, they forced their way over, and put the enemy to flight, killing numbers of them, among whom were their commander, General Davidson, a very valiant man, and several other officers.

The crossing of this ford was followed by the total defeat of another body of the enemy assembled at some miles distance, by Colonel Tarleton, at the head of his cavalry. He surprized them so completely, that they were instantly routed, with severe execution. This renewed the terror his former exploits had occasioned, and kept the inhabitants of the neighbouring districts in such awe, that they did not dare to take up arms against the British army on its march, notwithstanding they were notoriously as disaffected a people as any on the whole continent.

The first object in view after crossing the Catawba, was the pursuit of Colonel Morgan; who on hearing of the British army's approach, retired before it with the utmost celerity, marching day and night to reach the banks of the river Yadkin; he was followed with great eagerness by the British troops, who were extremely impatient to be revenged upon him for the check received at Broad River. But notwithstanding the vigour with which they proceeded, so many impediments arose in

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their way, from the difficulty of the roads, and the swell of the waters every where, that they could not come up with him till the evening of the second day's pursuit; by which time he had passed over the main body of his infantry, and all his cavalry, with most of his baggage. His rear-guard was routed and dispersed, and the remainder of his baggage taken. But as the ford through which he had crossed became immediately impassable, through the rains that fell that very evening, Lord Cornwallis was obliged to direct his march to the upper fords of the river.

As General Greene had not yet been joined by the reinforcements from Virginia, the British troops hastened to cut off his communication from that province, by marching with all speed to the river Dan, which forms the upper boundary between North Carolina and Virginia.

Such was the celerity of Lord Cornwallis, that he fully succeeded in his design. Finding himself between that province and General Greene's army, he proceeded in quest of him with the more expedition, as he now imagined that he would be compelled to an engagement, in order to extricate himself. He had been informed that all the fords of that river, excepting those of which he now was master, were impassable at this season, and that a sufficient quantity of boats could not possibly be procured to ferry over so large a body as that under General Greene. But contrary to his expectation, and the intelligence he had received, he soon discovered that his pursuit of the American General was fruitless. The bridges on the roads were all broken down, the boats destroyed or removed, and every obstruction contrived to retard his motions.—Arriving at Boyd's Ferry, on the fifteenth of February, he was informed that General Greene had crossed

crossed it some hours before, and was safe on the other side of the river with his whole army.

This was highly mortifying to Lord Cornwallis, who had entertained no doubt of overtaking and compelling him to fight. As all hopes were at an end of preventing the junction of the Virginian troops with General Greene; and as the British army was too feeble to follow him into Virginia, he now determined to repair to Hillsborough, and take up his quarters there, in order to give his troops some rest after the fatigues they had endured.

Notwithstanding they had failed in the design of intercepting the enemy, they had however enjoyed the satisfaction of forcing him to retire from the Carolinas; and had struck the people of those provinces with equal dread and astonishment at the invincible courage and perseverance with which they had gone through a constant series of the greatest hardships: Destitute of every refreshment and comfort, without any other support excepting what was indispensable for existence, they had spent the day in continual toil, marching through wastes and forests without roads or tracks, exposed to perpetual ambushes, and passing the night without cover, and open to all the inclemencies of weather.

While Lord Cornwallis was employed in these various expeditions, it was judged highly expedient to gain some convenient post on the sea-side of North Carolina, in order to establish a safer line of communication with him, than through that length of country by which it was now carried on with so much danger of interception. To this intent Colonel Balfour, who commanded at Charlestown in the absence of Lord Cornwallis, commissioned Major Craig to proceed to Cape Fear river, at the head of a considerable detachment, under the convoy of Captain Berkley, with some ships of force.

The troops and marines landed at some miles distance from the town of Wilmington, situated upon that river, and the shipping entered it at the same time; upon which the place surrendered at discretion. Some vessels laden with goods and war-like stores were taken; a body of the enemy that had assembled in the neighbourhood, were defeated, with the loss of a great quantity of ammunition, and the whole adjacent country was entirely reduced to subjection. After which, the town itself was put into a state of defence, and endeavours made to open a communication with Lord Cornwallis, according to the directions he had given.

The possession of Wilmington, and the retreat of General Greene into Virginia, had revived the hopes of the Royalists in the back parts of North Carolina. Some hundreds of them assembled with an intent of repairing to the King's standard at Hillsborough; on intelligence of which a strong party of the enemy marched to intercept them. Colonel Tarleton was sent, on the other hand, to protect them, and they received notice to hold themselves in readiness to join him. Unfortunately, on the approach of the American detachment, they mistook it for that commanded by Colonel Tarleton; the consequence was, that they were surrounded, and made prisoners by the enemy, who were accused, on this occasion, of having killed many of them after they had asked for quarter.

This accident, though not of much importance in itself, was of much disservice to the Royal cause, by discouraging many from joining the British standard who had been seeking the occasion of doing it, but were now deterred by the activity with which they saw that all intentions of this kind were frustrated.

In order to prevent any further attempts of this nature, and to encourage his own adherents, General

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ral Greene having been largely reinforced, repassed the river Dan, and advanced into North Carolina. As the strength he brought with him was much superior in number to that of Lord Cornwallis, it was imagined that he proposed to risk an engagement on the first opportunity that offered.

Colonel Tarleton was detached with a small, but select body to watch his motions. On the second of March, eighty-one, he fell in with considerable numbers of the enemy, whom he attacked and routed, driving them to their main body, which apprehending the approach of the whole British army, fell back to an advantageous position, in order to wait with more security the arrival of a very strong reinforcement of Continental regulars that was daily expected.

As General Greene's light infantry was very numerous, and consisted chiefly of marksmen, they proved so troublesome, that it was determined, if possible, to circumvent, and destroy or capture them. After using much vigilance, they were at length surprized in their quarters, and defeated with so much loss, that they were obliged to retire to their army, which Lord Cornwallis preparing to attack, General Greene seeing his people discouraged by the flight of his light troops, made an immediate retreat.

The position which he took was so strong, and at the same time so convenient, either to advance or retire, at pleasure, that Lord Cornwallis finding it impracticable to force the Americans to an engagement, contented himself with keeping them from making irruptions into that part of the country which was represented to him as well affected to the British cause. But notwithstanding his care and circumspection in favour of those whom he esteemed his friends, experience daily convinced him, that if they were not few in number, they

were however very averse to join him; and that though they might be willing to submit to the authority of Britain, they had no inclination to run any hazard for its re-establishment.

The long expected reinforcements having at length joined General Greene, his army now amounted to upwards of seven thousand men, two-thirds of which consisted of regulars and well trained rifle and marksmen. With this force he no longer hesitated to face the British army, which did not much exceed two thousand men.

On the fifteenth of March, at day-break, Lord Cornwallis set forward to meet the American General, who was reported to be advancing full speed to attack him. Colonel Tarleton falling in with the advanced parties of the enemy, charged them with his usual spirit, and put them instantly to the rout, pursuing them till he came within sight of their main body, which was drawn up in order of battle upon a rising ground; not far from a town called Guildford.

Between the two armies lay a plantation, with some open fields on each side; beyond it stood, at some distance, a wood, about one mile in depth; the ground behind it being an extensive plain.—The ground whereon the American army stood, was skirted towards the right of the British army with a continuance of wood.

The front of the wood behind the plantation, was occupied by the first line of the American army, composed of the North Carolina militia; the second was formed in the wood, and consisted of well disciplined Virginia-men; the third, posted in the same manner, was a chosen body of Continental veterans: their right and left were covered by dragoons and rifle-men.

On reconnoitring the disposition of the enemy, as the wood appeared less thick and bushy on their left,

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Lord Cornwallis determined to make it the principal object of his attack. The smallness of his force admitted of no more than two lines. His right wing was commanded by General Leslie; his left by Colonel Webster: a body of reserve, with the cavalry, under Colonel Tarleton, were posted in readiness to support, with facility every corps that stood before it, and to seize every advantage.

The battle began about two in the afternoon; when after many severe discharges on both sides, the superiority of the Americans enabling them to out-flank the wings of the British army, the second line was obliged to unite with the first, in order to form an equal length of front with the Americans, who had till then, by extending their wings, galled it with a heavy fire on each side.

In this position, notwithstanding the disparity of numbers, the British line pressed forward with a vigour which the enemy were not able to withstand; their front line was entirely broken, and put to flight. The British troops now entered the wood, to attack the second; but it stood its ground with much more firmness. The troops composing it were, in fact, little, if at all inferior to regulars: they made a most resolute defence, and were not discomfited without much difficulty; neither did they betake themselves to flight, but fell back into the third line, consisting entirely of selected regulars.

The advantages of the ground were wholly on the side of the Americans. The wood, wherein both armies were now engaged, was so thick, that little or no order could be observed in advancing upon the enemy. The formation of a regular line being impracticable, personal courage and intrepidity were now upon a parity with military skill and discipline.

In no one action during the American war, was the native bravery of the British nation more resolutely displayed, and more effectually exerted.— The battle was now become a trial of the strength, activity, and valour of every man that fought. The enemy that had been broken in the commencement of the action, now rallied every where, and the fight was renewed with the greatest degree of fierceness and obstinacy. Both parties engaged in separate detachments, unconnected with each other; but still the numerousness of the enemy empowered them to attack several of the British corps in their front, flank, and rear, and to inclose them in such a manner, as to oblige them, notwithstanding their inferiority, to present a face on every side.

In this manner the fight was carried on for a considerable time. The British troops however still continued to advance, and the enemy gradually to retire towards the further end of the wood. It was at length penetrated by a division of the British army; this was the second battalion of Guards. On their entrance into the plain, they found a large body of the enemy's regulars drawn up in readiness to receive them. But their attack was so impetuous, that the enemy was immediately routed, with the loss of their artillery, and driven into a wood in their rear. Here they recovered themselves, and the Guards pursuing them, received such a fire, that they were compelled to retire into the plain, where they were charged by the enemy's cavalry. The troops which they had before routed, having also rallied, took this opportunity to sally from the wood, and retake their artillery. The enemy's great superiority in numbers had thrown the Guards into disorder; but their commander, General O'Hara, though wounded, by his spirited exertions brought them again into order and action.

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By this time other divisions of the British army had made their way through the wood, and charged the enemy as fast as they came up. They were so effectually supported by the artillery, commanded by Captain Macleod, and the cavalry under Colonel Tarleton, who successively arrived at this critical juncture, that after a bloody and hard contested conflict, the enemy was at last completely defeated in this quarter, with the total loss of artillery and ammunition.

But the action, though terminated here, still continued in other parts. A heavy fire was kept up on the right of the British army, where both sides maintained the fight with as much fury as ever. The appearance of Colonel Tarleton quickly decided the contest. He made so resolute an onset, that the enemy was instantly broken, and obliged to fly to the thickest parts of the woods.

The remaining divisions of the British army that were yet engaged, had at the same time the good fortune to rout those that were opposed to them, who being informed that their principal troops had been worsted and put to flight, thought it necessary to consult their own safety, by withdrawing with the utmost speed.

The excessive fatigue undergone by the British troops, in encountering such a multitude of enemies, prevented these from being closely pursued. They did not, however, make any halt till they were near twenty miles distance from the field of battle.

So great was the want of provisions in the British army, that Lord Cornwallis was not able to follow the blow he had given the enemy. Their loss in slain and wounded was computed at above two thousand. But what was of more importance, the superiority of the British troops had been confirmed in so conspicuous a manner, that had not every

kind of impediment and difficulty arose to obstruct their progress, such was the dread and terror they had inspired, that it was highly probable the success of this day would have been attended with the most fortunate consequences to the British arms.

The splendour of this victory was clouded, however, by the loss of a number of brave officers and soldiers; small in itself, and in comparison of the glory and advantage that were obtained; but great, when weighed with the smallness of the army of which they formed so considerable a part, and with the professional merit of those who fell.— Among these Colonel Webster was highly and deservedly regretted: his services throughout the whole of the campaign in the Carolinas had been truly eminent, and he had in no little degree contributed to the gaining of the battle in which he lost his life.

Such was the zeal and resolution displayed by the British troops on this memorable day, that it was hard to decide who had distinguished themselves most. By the unanimous consent of all, no man could have exhibited more personal courage, as well as generalship, than Lord Cornwallis did upon this trying occasion. Notwithstanding an ill state of health, he was present wherever there was most danger. To the great satisfaction of the whole army, he had the good fortune to escape without a wound, though two horses were killed under him.

After resting at Guildford two days, during which they wanted bread, the exhausted condition of the country compelled the troops to quit that place, and to direct their march towards Wilmington.— They halted only two days more on their road to that town, in order to procure some provisions.— They now fully experienced how much they had been deceived in the expectation of being joined by numbers in those parts that had been the scene of their

their military operations. Though victorious, none of their adherents ventured to avow themselves, and take up arms in their favour. Lord Cornwallis issued a proclamation, in order to stimulate them, but it proved ineffectual.

After a tedious march of three weeks, the British army arrived at Wilmington on the seventh of April. Here the first care of Lord Cornwallis was to provide a sufficiency of supplies to enable him to take the field as soon as he had given his people that repose to which they were so justly entitled, after the long course of toil and hardship they had endured, and had submitted to with so much readiness and alacrity.

In the mean time, the inutility of the various plans that had been formed on the supposed co-operation of the friends to the British government, appeared in so strong a light, that all hopes of essential assistance from that quarter were totally at an end. The utmost that was now looked for on their part, was a cheerful submission to the British arms, in case of their success, and such accidental intelligence as they were able to convey without fear of a discovery.

It now became evident, that the spirit and activity of the party opposite to Britain, were incomparably superior to the exertions of its friends; whence it was not unreasonably inferred, that notwithstanding all assertions to the contrary, the number of these was much smaller than had been represented, and that their timidity and backwardness proceeded from the consciousness of their inferiority in point of strength and numbers.

The frequent representations of their ability and inclination to take an active part in favour of Britain, had more than once led the British commanders into unexpected difficulties. The desire of leaving no means untried that could be productive

of any success, had induced them to make the utmost trial of the degree of confidence they could place in the promises of aid which they so frequently received. Nor did they ever desist from repeating these trials; being determined that their well-wishers should have no cause or pretext to complain that they had wanted opportunities to testify by their actions, the loyalty and attachment which they had so constantly, and so warmly professed.

C H A P. LVII.

Hurricane in the West Indies.—Secret Treaty between Holland and America.—Rupture with Holland.—Parliamentary Debates relating to these Matters.—Losses of the Dutch.

1781.

THE autumn of the year eighty was marked by one of the most dreadful and destructive hurricanes that was ever experienced in the West Indies. The damage done by it to some of the British and French islands, as well as to their shipping in those seas, was immense, and exceeded any losses, from such a cause, that had yet happened in that part of the world.

The British island that suffered most, was the longest settled, and most flourishing one, Barbadoes. It underwent almost a total destruction. The islands of Jamaica, Grenada, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia, partook greatly in the general calamity.

The French islands of Martinico and Guadalupe suffered also dreadfully. The principal towns in both were levelled with the earth. Multitudes were lost through the irruption of the sea, and the violence of the storm, especially at Barbadoes, where some thousands perished. Among the vast quantity of shipping cast away were two British ships of the line, and seven frigates, besides other armed vessels. Several French ships of war met with the same fate.

The amount of the terrible losses incurred on this occasion, added to those that had befallen the nation during the preceding summer, by the capture of the East and West India fleets, with part

part of that destined for Quebec, was so enormous, that it spread an extensive alarm throughout the realm. The expences of the war were annually increasing, while, through this accumulation of adversity, the means of supporting it were considerably diminished.

From these motives, together with the remembrance of the domestic horrors during the late riots, the temper of the nation at large became sullen and discontented. It seemed to some, as if the present period had been marked by destiny for misfortunes and mortifications of every kind.

In the mean time, the denial to redress the many grievances complained of in the petitions from the counties in England, contributed powerfully to augment the general dissatisfaction. Various meetings were held, in order to keep alive the resolution taken to insist upon the granting of their demands.

Such was the general disposition of the people, when an accident happened, which called up their attention in a particular manner, as it opened a new and very important scene to their consideration.

Since the commencement of hostilities between Great Britain and the Colonies, an intercourse very inimical to the former had been carried on by the Dutch with the latter. Though not openly avowed by the States General, it was encouraged by numbers of individuals, not only of the commercial classes, who profited by it, but of all other denominations. The emissaries of France excited such a spirit of enmity to Britain, that all the representations which were made of the detriment accruing to it, from such a conduct being permitted or connived at, made no impression on the States.

When France declared herself in favour of America, the French faction, which had been gradually gaining strength, determined to follow the example of

of that power; but in order at the same time to avoid the resentment of Great Britain, judged it safest to enter into a clandestine treaty with the Americans. To this purpose, a private negotiation was set on foot with the commissioners appointed by Congress.

This negotiation was principally patronized by the regency of Amsterdam, a city that had long been noted for its partiality to the cause of France, or of any power unfriendly to Great Britain. The pensionary of this city, Mr. Van Berkel, a man of abilities, and a sworn enemy to the English, was the person who conducted this business. Being from his office a minister of state of the greatest authority and influence, it was speedily terminated; a friendship and alliance was settled between the Dutch and the Americans; of which the common enmity of both to the British nation became the strongest and surest bond.

The terms of the treaty were indeed provisional, and the treaty itself purely commercial; but the Americans were clearly treated with as a free and independent nation.

Though Amsterdam alone seemed to act upon this occasion, yet the world well understood, that the weight of this great and powerful city was too heavy to be counterbalanced by that of the whole province, of which it was the capital, or even of all the Seven United Provinces.

It was from the knowledge of this, together with the superiority of the French faction in Holland, that the Congress relied on the strength and validity of any measures and transactions that might take place between the respective agents of the contracting parties.

Still, however, this treaty was negotiated and concluded in the utmost concealment and privacy. It was signed on the fourth of September, seventy-eight,

eight, by Mr. Doneaville, a Dutch merchant, on the one hand, and Mr. William Lee on the other; both of whom had repaired to Aix-la-Chapelle for that purpose, in order to avoid all suspicion.

This transaction had now lain dormant two entire years; but the ruling powers in America were highly desirous that it should be brought to maturity, and openly acknowledged on the part of Holland. The events of these two years were such as encouraged them to think that the Dutch would not be backward to comply with their wishes. Much ill blood and altercation had been created between Great Britain and Holland, through the continual assistance given to France by the latter, and the resolute methods adopted by the former in order to prevent it.

Such was the situation of affairs, when Congress took the resolution to depute a person of the highest rank among them to Holland, in the character of an ambassador, to the intent of bringing the business of an alliance between both countries to a solid and effectual conclusion.

The person chosen for this important embassy was Mr. Henry Laurens, late President of the Congress, a gentleman of known abilities, and respectable character. The high station he had filled with so much propriety and applause, gave additional weight to the commission he was invested with, and it was hoped would prove a motive for accelerating the union proposed between Holland and America.

With this view and destination, he embarked at Philadelphia, in a vessel bound to Holland; but it was taken on its voyage, in the beginning of September, eighty, and all the papers relating to his mission were seized. He was himself, on his arrival in England, committed as a state prisoner to close confinement in the Tower.

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The object of his commission being fully discovered by his papers, the British ambassador at the Hague remonstrated in very spirited terms to the States General, on the unfriendliness and impropriety of suffering such transactions to pass unnoticed and uncensured in any of their subjects: He demanded a formal disavowal of the proceedings of the regency of Amsterdam, an adequate satisfaction for the insult offered to Great Britain, and a due punishment on the offenders.

The memorial to this purpose was presented to the States General on the tenth of November eighty, and was followed by another, still more pressing, on the twelfth of December: but neither of them produced any effect. The only answer that could be obtained was, that they would be taken into consideration according to the usages and forms customary in such matters; and that a reply would be given as soon as the nature of their government would admit.

This answer not proving satisfactory to the court of Great Britain, it came to the resolution of recalling the British ambassador from the Hague, and of proceeding to immediate hostilities against the subjects of the United Provinces.

A declaration was issued accordingly on the twentieth of December, wherein the conduct of the States General was severely reprehended, for their neglect of fulfilling the part of friends and allies to Great Britain, to which they were bound by so many treaties, and for the unjust and inimical partiality constantly displayed in favour of France, and every other foe to the British nation, as well as for the countenance and support so notoriously afforded to the Americans. This conduct was imputed to the prevalence of the French faction in Amsterdam: it was specified in the declaration, that, were it practicable, the British government would

would direct the vengeance of Britain against that city alone, without involving the remainder of the Dutch nation in the punishment which that part of it so justly merited. The utmost readiness was at the same time professed to return to the ancient union and amity between Great Britain and Holland, on this latter's giving satisfaction for its past, and security for its future conduct. "We mean only," concluded the declaration, "to provide for our own security, by defeating the dangerous designs that have been formed against us. We shall ever be disposed to return to friendship with the States General, when they sincerely revert to that system which the wisdom of their ancestors formed, and which has now been subverted by a powerful faction, conspiring with France against the true interests of the republic, no less than against those of Great Britain."

In this manner was added another enemy to the formidable combination already subsisting against this country. What rendered him the more dangerous was his proximity, and his great maritime strength. It was not, however, without the utmost astonishment, that the politicians of Europe beheld a connection formed between the House of Bourbon and the United Provinces. The dangers to which they exposed themselves by such a measure, were manifest; while the utility resulting from it was problematical. In the opinion of the unprejudiced, it seemed to be momentary at best; and threatened to subject them to many more inconveniences in future, than they would derive benefits from it at the present.

Their alliance with America was considered at the same time as a measure dictated by the intrigues of France, and taken up in a fit of resentment for the obstructions they had met with in the prosecution of their commercial schemes with both. Instead

Thus, instead of attending to the essential and long established maxims of their policy, they were led away by the private views of merchants and traders, whose transient benefit was unhappily consulted, in preference to the permanent interest of the state.

In this critical situation of national affairs, a new Parliament was called, and met at the close of October. The Speech from the Throne was remarkably spirited, and descriptive of the resolution and success with which Great Britain had so nobly withstood and disappointed the efforts of its numerous enemies. It held out with great strength and animation of language, the necessity of continuing vigorously to exert the courage and power of the nation in order to obtain an honourable peace.

A warm debate was occasioned in the House of Commons by the motion for the address. The question so often agitated concerning the propriety of the American war, was again brought up and litigated on both sides with great energy. Those who maintained the necessity of still carrying it on, alledged the successes of the preceding campaign; the terror with which the astonishing valour and exertions of the British troops had struck the enemy; the shame and injustice of relinquishing our friends and adherents to the mercy of their oppressors; and the disgrace, as well as detriment, of suffering America to fall into the hands of the House of Bourbon.

It was insisted, that the terms offered by Great Britain were highly acceptable to the majority of the people in the Colonies, and were opposed by none but the emissaries of Congress; which, though the most powerful, was by no means the most numerous party. The complaints occasioned by the hardships experienced by persons of all ranks, and

above all, the depreciation of their paper currency, shewed in what little credit the ruling powers were held throughout the continent, and with what readiness the people at large would embrace an opportunity of returning to their former connection with Britain, were they sure of being firmly and permanently supported.

The ancient motto of Oliver Cromwell ought now, it was asserted, to become the inflexible determination of Great Britain. Peace should be sought at the point of the sword. The only means of humbling France, was to crush rebellion in America. Were Britain to make those concessions that were now demanded by the Colonists, were it to acknowledge their independence, even this step, low and humiliating as it was, would not purchase peace. The Americans knew their situation too well to dare abandon France at the present moment. The policy of that power had too deeply embarked them in its interests, for them to relinquish it, without exposing themselves to such inconveniences and dangers as the commonest prudence would lead them to shun. They considered themselves as tied down by principles of honour and gratitude, not to forsake the French; nor were they less swayed in this matter by motives of interest: were they to withdraw themselves from the confederacy that had been formed for their support, they would not only be branded with infamy, but would in future meet with no allies in case of need.

It was necessary, for these reasons, to compel them by dint of arms to return to submission. Were they to be brought to such a condition as to find themselves unable to pursue the contest, they could then give it up without disgracing themselves; and would stand acquitted to those powers who were now contending for them. It could not therefore be expected they would desist, before they

They were reduced to the extremest necessity of doing it.

Intrepidity and perseverance were, it was well known, the native attributes of the British nation: they had been put to the severest test, and had not yet been found deficient. It was to be hoped they would endure to the last, and triumph over all difficulties.

Such was the purport of the various arguments used by those who pleaded for the continuance of coercive measures in America.

Opposition was no less vehement in representing the perpetual disappointments of ministerial hopes in America, and in combating their future expectations of success by the experience of past misfortunes.

They asserted that the universal sense of the nation was for immediate peace with America, in order to prosecute the more vigorously the war into which we had been unfortunately drawn against so many powers, envious of our grandeur and prosperity. These were the enemies against whom our vengeance ought to be pointed; to humble them ought now to be our principal aim: in such a case only the ambition of victory and conquest was laudable. Here we stood upon the ground of self-defence; but by pursuing the system of deluging the plains of America with the blood of our fellow-citizens, as well as our own, in order to bring them to our terms, we acted the part of tyrants, which even the most splendid successes could not justify.

But no real success, they said, had attended the British arms during the present campaign. Glorious victories had been won, and the highest reputation had been obtained by the skill of the commanders, and the bravery of the soldiers. But what had been the result of these hard fought battles? Was the enemy subdued?—Was a single pro-

vince fairly reduced to our obedience?—The sum total of all our exploits was the acquisition of great honour,—but no more.

On that high summit of military fame whereon we stood in America, we were not, however, without antagonists. Though confessedly our inferiors, they still maintained their ground with invincible obstinacy, and daily made it evident, that victories or defeats were equally conducive in weakening our strength, and confirming them in their resistance, from the sure prospect of wasting our resources, by patiently enduring the pressures brought upon them by our power. Their passive valour would, in the end, prove an over-match for that active spirit which prompted our people to those indefatigable and surprizing exertions, that threw such a lustre on their character. Though the Americans could not conquer, they would weary us out; and the day would come, when we should be obliged to surcease, through mere lassitude, or entangle ourselves perhaps in such difficulties, through the enterprising disposition of our disposition, as might be found insurmountable, and lead us, when we least expected it, into irretrievable ruin.

Notwithstanding the assertion so often and so confidently repeated, that a majority of the inhabitants of America were friendly to this country, constant experience demonstrated the contrary. In the midst of our victories, we still found them averse to conciliation, though we held out terms as favourable as they could desire, short of independence. But instead of joining our armies, even those who had promised obedience, and bound themselves in the most solemn manner to be faithful to our cause, forsook it the moment they found an opportunity, and repaired to the enemy with those very arms we had put into their hands, to be used in our defence.

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These were facts of notoriety, and proved that no dependence could be placed on the apparent submission of those who were awed by our arms. Nor was the assistance of those who came over to us a circumstance worth dwelling upon; they were altogether but a handful, when compared with the residue of their countrymen who were in opposition to Britain.

The only good consequence derivable from our successes, appeared to be the means they afforded of obtaining honourable terms of peace. While the impression arising from them rested upon the minds of the Americans, we ought, if wise, to hold out offers of reconciliation with them of such a nature, as they could not consistently with their evident interest refuse to accept. To say that their connection with France was so binding, that they could not release themselves from it, was nugatory in the extremest degree. Were we to grant them independence, neither France, nor any other power, could either blame them for closing with the offer, or be able to make them repent it. Were America thoroughly sensible that Britain harboured no farther designs of coercion or enmity, it could not be doubted, they would meet us with every disposition we could reasonably wish to find in men to whom we were willing to make the concessions they demanded.

It had long ago been the opinion of the most experienced commanders, that a conquest of America was impracticable, with all the strength that Great Britain could employ for that end. The nature of the country fought for the inhabitants, and rendered them invincible. If this was true while we had them alone to encounter, it was certainly much more manifest since the combination now framed in their favour by every nation in Europe, without exception.

Strange as it was, and unexampled in history, we were become an object of enmity to every state. They all co-operated, openly or clandestinely, to the detriment of Great Britain. Its humiliation was the avowed aim of all the crowned heads upon the European continent. The causes of this inveteracy were the incomparably superior degree of greatness and prosperity enjoyed by this nation over all others, and the excessive jealousy it had excited. Had we not unadvisedly quarrelled with our Colonies, we might still have remained on this splendid footing, and have set their envy at defiance. But their pride had too long suffered from our superiority, to omit so fair an opportunity of humbling it as that which our mismanagement had thrown into their hands.

Still, however, we might emerge out of our difficulties, by recurring to a pacification with America. It were the height of imprudence and obstinacy to continue a contest, from which nothing but a series of mortifications had arisen, and could be expected. An application of the enormous expense vainly profused in that quarter, to a prosecution of the war with our ancient and hereditary enemies, would, in all likelihood, turn the scale effectually in our favour, as to restore us to that state of strength and importance, from which our embracing more objects than we could possibly accomplish, had occasioned us for the present to decline.

In consequence of these various arguments opposition insisted that the address should not, in any part, give the least countenance to the prosecution of the American war. But after a long altercation, an address in conformity with the Royal speech, was voted upon a division, by a majority of two hundred and twelve, against one hundred and thirty.

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The violence which accompanied the reprobation of the American war, did not, however, prevent the thanks of the House being voted with perfect unanimity to Sir Henry Clinton, Lord Cornwallis, and Admiral Arbuthnot, for their respective services in that part of the world.

In the mean time, the rupture with Holland became an object of serious discussion both in and out of doors. On the meeting of Parliament, after the usual recess at the expiration of the year, a message was delivered to both Houses from the Throne, conveying a formal notification of hostilities being declared against that state.

The observations made by opposition were, that however the justice of the war with Holland might be incontrovertible, still the prudence and policy of such a measure were highly questionable. Great Britain was so deeply involved, that it behoved ministers to use all their abilities in preventing any accession of help to its numerous enemies. Haste and precipitation did not become the present circumstances of this country; it were even wiser to connive at small injuries, than expose ourselves to greater, by resenting them at an improper season.

To dissemble and temporise in dangerous situations, was the long established maxim of all sound politicians. It would have reflected no disgrace upon the British ministry, had it, conformably to this rule, avoided a rupture with a state, which, though it might have been deficient in the performance of its treaties with Britain, could not strictly be ranked in the number of its enemies.

Holland, though governed by commercial maxims, wanted neither sense to perceive its true interests, nor spirit to assert them. The Dutch were allied to us from necessity: they knew that the House of Bourbon could only propose its own views in its pretences to vindicate their rights against the

encroachments of the English. They had accordingly delayed, with the utmost care and circumspection, to enter into any measures that could be interpreted as directly hostile to this country.— Though the mercantile classes in Holland had not been prevented from supplying the French with various articles, to our detriment, still as the States had not manifested any unfriendly designs, it was an act of unpardonable temerity to compel them, in their own defence, to become our avowed enemies, and to join the confederacy formed by the intrigues of the House of Bourbon.

True it was, the Dutch had not observed the treaties framed in former times between Great Britain and Holland: but ministry ought to know that treaties were the result of actual circumstances, and were no further attended to than present exigencies made it necessary. The Dutch beheld us at variance with a part of our own people; they saw the whole world preparing to reap the benefit of a commercial correspondence with that great and important part of the British empire; stimulated by motives of profit, Amsterdam had followed the example; but was alone and uncountenanced.

Ministry should remember, that the fate of every state which acted with haughtiness in the day of its power and prosperity, was to raise a combination against it, soon or late. Spain had experienced this truth two centuries ago; France had in the last; and it was the turn of Great Britain to feel its effects in the present. Ministerial arrogance had driven America into rebellion, and now made Holland our foe.

The ministerial answer to these allegations was, that Great Britain had displayed a patience and moderation to which the conduct of the Dutch, in the present instance, by no means entitled them.— They had not only refused the assistance specified and

and stipulated by the most solemn treaties; but had in direct contradiction to them, assisted the enemies of Britain in the most open and avowed manner, with implements and materials for the construction and equipment of their navies. When warned of the injury accruing to this country by such a proceeding, they had unwarrantably distorted the tenour and words of a treaty, into a privilege granted them to act in this manner; as if it were possible, in the nature of things, that any nation could be guilty of such absurdity, as to consent to its own destruction. They nevertheless persisted in this violation of friendship, as well as of the plainest meaning of those treaties.

Would opposition deny that it was from Holland France received its naval stores, and those numerous articles that enabled it to contend with the fleets of Britain? Was it not clear and notorious, that the Dutch exerted themselves to serve the French with as much zeal, as if they were the best friends to Holland, and the English their greatest enemies?

It was a mere subterfuge to say, that Holland could not be considered as acting in the light of a principal in the treaty concluded between the regency of Amsterdam and the agents of America.— That city was well known to bear a preponderating sway in all the deliberations of the States General. The fact was, they did not dare to call the conduct of that city into question. What it had done, ought therefore to be considered as the act and deed of the Dutch republic. It was nugatory to disjoin the measures resolved upon by the Amsterdammers from those of the States themselves. The French faction, by its influence in that city, governed, in reality, the Seven United Provinces.— In declaring hostilities against them, Britain had done

done no more than determined to attack France in one of its most vulnerable parts.

So far was the British ministry from conducting itself arrogantly with Holland, that in the repeated remonstrances presented to the States, on the un-friendliness and impropriety of permitting their subjects to carry on this pernicious intercourse with France, no arguments were used but such as arose from the necessity of continuing the long amity and good offices that had so long subsisted between both countries, to their evident and reciprocal benefit. So cautious of giving the least offence or cause of complaint, so circumspectful was the British ministry in every step that was taken, that when constrained by absolute necessity to cut off this channel of supply from the French, it still preserved the property of the ships laden with stores for France to the Dutch owner. His cargo, when seized, was paid for, and his vessel returned. Thus France alone was detrimented by the seizure; and no reason to complain was given to the merchants in Holland, any more than to the States.

Was it consistent with the dignity of Great Britain tamely to submit to the treatment it had received in the person of its ambassador? Had opposition forgot the slight and disrespect shown to the requisitions made in the King's name to the States General, for satisfaction on account of the city of Amsterdam's breach of the peace between both nations? Was not the silence so haughtily affected on this occasion by the States, a refusal, in effect, to give any satisfactory answer? Was it not making themselves accessory to the insult offered to the Crown of Great Britain? Was it otherwise than participation in a measure so glaringly offensive to this country, to pass it over without the least censure or disapprobation?

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The danger of increasing the number of our enemies was purely ideal. The Dutch were already our foes; the more dangerous, as under the pretence of treaties, they laboured with all their might to do us every injury in their power. Under this knowledge and conviction, it was unworthy of the spirit and character of the British nation, to make use of a dissimulation which our enemies would construe into fear and consciousness of our debility. The Dutch themselves would be the readiest of any to profit of this averseness in us to resent their behaviour, and would feel an additional fervour in the cause of our enemies.

When matters were come to such a crisis between two states, nothing but pusillanimity or weakness could prevent the aggrieved party from doing itself justice. Neither of these, it was well known, was the case of Great Britain. It had hitherto faced its many adversaries with a strength and courage which they had not been able to overcome. Their resources, from daily experience, appeared no ways superior to our own. We met them wherever they were to be found, and the balance of war was far from being in their favour. The addition of Holland to the numerous host we had to encounter, was more nominal than effective. The Dutch had long combated us by means, which, though indirect, had proved highly injurious to this country. By compelling them to stand forth openly, they would henceforward be liable to receive that chastisement from us which they had hitherto contrived to evade. We had done no more than dragged a lurking fox from his concealment, and obliged him to avow himself.

Holland, in espousing the cause of America, and of the House of Bourbon, had broke that system of European policies, on which the balance of power had so long rested. This balance it was the interest

interest of Holland, more than of any other state, to preserve entire and unimpaired. Were it to be destroyed, Holland would become the first victim of her own erroneous politics. The very object of the war on the part of Great Britain, was not more the reduction of her refractory Colonies, than the maintenance of that balance. The experience of two centuries had proved the necessity of Great Britain and Holland's united co-operation in its support. To them it was chiefly owing that Europe had resisted the power of Spain and France successively. It was much to be lamented that despicable considerations of transient and precarious gains, could have influenced the ruling powers in the Seven United Provinces to abandon the cause of Europe, and to betray their own country. It would, evidently be the principal sufferer from the measures they had been so fatally persuaded to adopt, in contradiction to those maxims of policy which had so long been considered as the fundamental rule of their conduct by the wisest of those who had been at the head of the Dutch commonwealth ever since its foundation.

It was clear that the States General had determined to proceed farther than a simple permission to their subjects to supply France with those articles which were necessary for a naval war. The mercantile classes in Holland, inspirited by the French faction, and prompted by the basest views of interest, had presented repeated petitions for convoys to their trading fleets. These petitions, it was known, had produced the intended effect; armaments were now preparing in the Dutch ports to protect the vessels destined to carry naval stores to the ports of France. Such a measure added to the treaty framed between the governing men in Holland and the Americans, left no room to doubt of their real intentions respecting Great Britain, and de-

Demonstrated their hostility beyond the power of refutation.

Was it therefore consistent with prudence to wait until the preparations indisputably meant against this country should be brought to such a state of forwardness, as to enable the Dutch to enter upon the execution of the designs they had formed against us? Did not prudence dictate the speediest anticipation of their sinister intentions?—In the preceding war, it was precisely by a preventive step of this kind that we frustrated the projects of France before it had leisure to bring them to maturity.

The arguments used in Parliament by ministry were approved of, as justly founded, by the majority of people without doors, as well as within.—The conduct of the Dutch was indeed so inimical, that no apology could be made for it. The only question that was agitated in the political circles, was the propriety of resenting it in the present very critical circumstances of the nation.

Hostilities began against them by a detention of their shipping in the different ports of England; and by the capture of two men of war of fifty-four guns. On the granting of letters of marque and reprisal against them, a multitude of privateers was added to those that were already in commission, and a very great number of Dutch merchant-men were brought into the British ports.

Instructions were dispatched at the same time to the commanders of the British forces in the West Indies to proceed to immediate hostilities against the Dutch settlements in those parts.

Admiral Rodney was returned from his expedition to North America, and was preparing to attack such of the French islands as seemed least in a condition of defence, when he was apprised of the

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rupture with Holland, and directed to commence hostilities against its possessions in the West Indies.

The most important of these was the island of St. Eustatius, commonly called Statia. Though not twenty miles in circumference, it abounded with riches, through the vast conflux of trade from every other island in those seas. Being a free port, it was open to the subjects of all the powers at war. By these means a communication was established among them, through which they were enabled to carry on a commercial correspondence which greatly mitigated the inconveniences of war. The Dutch, under whose mediation all trading business was transacted, reaped, of course, immense benefit from the numberless commissions with which they were entrusted, and from the vast sale of those merchandises which they disposed of to all parties in virtue of their neutrality.

Such was the situation of this famous island when Admiral Rodney suddenly appeared before it with a naval and land force, which it was in no condition to resist. It surrendered therefore without any stipulations.

The value that fell into the hands of the captors was prodigious. It amounted, at a moderate calculation, to four millions sterling. Exclusive of what was found ashore, upwards of two hundred sail of merchant-men were taken, besides a ship of sixty guns, a frigate of forty, and five others from thirty to fourteen.

So little were the inhabitants of this island under any apprehensions of danger, that their warehouses were not sufficient to contain the quantity of commercial articles imported for sale. The very streets and beach were, in the Admiral's own words, covered with hogsheads of tobacco and sugar. The Governor could hardly give credit to the officer who summoned him to surrender.

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The intelligence of this capture was the more agreeably received in England, as the loss fell chiefly upon the city of Amsterdam. The French and Americans were also considerable sufferers, and not a few of the British merchants; who trusting to the neutrality of the place, had consigned valuable cargoes to their correspondents there; all which, on its falling into the hands of Britain, were seized as Dutch property.

The settlements belonging to the Dutch on the southern continent of America, situated on the rivers Berbice, Isequibo, and Demerary, shared the same fate as Statia. They were taken by a squadron of privateers, who associated for that purpose. The treatment these settlements experienced was much more favourable than that of the people at Statia. The fact was, that no suspicions lay against them of having proved serviceable in any degree to the enemies of Great Britain; while, on the contrary, Statia was looked upon as the magazine from whence the French islands were supplied with provisions, and all kinds of necessaries, and whence the Americans drew immense quantities of warlike stores, as well as other articles of merchandise.

In consequence of the different light in which they were viewed, the former were left in possession of their private property and civil government. Previous to their being attacked, they had, upon information of the rupture between Great Britain and Holland, sent a deputation to Barbadoes, with offers to submit on terms usually granted in such cases, and referring for that purpose to those upon which they imagined Statia had surrendered; in these, however, they had the good fortune not to be involved.

The confiscation of mercantile property at Statia, occasioned heavy complaints among the British merchants in the West Indies, and in Britain itself. Warm

Warm representations were made upon the subject, followed by proceedings in the courts of law.— Hence animosities arose between the complainants and the commanders of the British armaments in those parts; which, it was thought, proved not a little prejudicial to the service.

The reduction of these various possessions of the Dutch in this part of the world, was felt by them in the most sensible manner. The profits derived from the commerce of which they were the mediators and managers, were immense. It was a commerce of clear and certain gain, as it was attended with no risk on their part, and consisted wholly in configurations.

Such heavy losses in the very outset of a war, into which they had drawn themselves without necessity, and against their demonstrable interest, excited the loudest clamours among those people throughout the Seven United Provinces, who were not entirely devoted to the French. That party which had recommended violent measures against Great Britain, began to lose its popularity in proportion to the distresses which were now daily accumulating on the trading individuals, of which the Dutch nation is chiefly composed.

C H A P. LVIII.

Naval Transactions in the West Indies.—Loss of Tobago and Pensacola.—Continuation of the Siege of Gibraltar.

1781.

THE little progress made by the confederacy against Great Britain, still continued a matter of utter astonishment to Europe. With a decided superiority in number of ships and of men in favour of the former, the war was hitherto carried on with so much equality of success on both sides, that it was evident the palm of skilfulness and exertion belonged incontrovertibly to this country.

The close of the year eighty had left France disappointed in North America, and enfeebled in the West Indies; where the fleets of Great Britain had maintained the unrivalled command of the sea, and had begun the naval campaign of the ensuing year with the most alarming successes against its Dutch allies.

In order to retrieve these disgraces, and to strike a blow of decisive consequence, the Court of France spent the winter in making the greatest efforts to repair its marine, and enable it to return to a fresh trial of skill and fortune with that of Britain.

About the end of March, eighty-one, the Count de Grasle sailed from Brest, at the head of twenty-one ships of the line, and a fleet of merchant-men and transports, consisting of near three hundred vessels, on board of which were six thousand troops. His destination was for Martinico, where he was to be joined by another squadron.

The naval strength under the British commanders on the windward station amounted at this time to twenty-one sail of the line: most of these were detached under Admirals Hood and Drake, to meet Count de Grasse, and prevent his junction with the squadron at Martinico.

On the twenty-eighth of April, they received notice of the approach of the French fleet, and took their position between it and the harbour of Port Royal. But notwithstanding their vigilance, the various movements they were obliged to make, in order to come up with the French fleet, enabled the ships in that port to sail out of it, and join the Count de Grasse. By this junction he had a superiority of six ships of the line; his force amounting to twenty-four, and that under Admiral Hood to eighteen.

Notwithstanding this great disparity, the utmost endeavours were used by the British Admiral to bring the enemy to action. As the French were to windward, it lay entirely at their option whether to accept or decline an engagement. They adhered upon this occasion to that system of fighting which they had constantly practised ever since the beginning of the war; they engaged at too great a distance for any decision, and kept so far aloof on this day in particular, as to throw their fire entirely away during a great part of the action.

It seems the French Admiral was convinced that the British fleet, through the variety of efforts it would make to close in with him, would afford some opportunity of taking it at a disadvantage. This hope was in some measure accomplished. Its van, with some ships of its centre division, were in consequence of their endeavours to near him, compelled to sustain such a superiority of fire, as did considerable damage to several of them, though not without still more

more detriment to those French ships with which they had been able to close:

After making various endeavours to approach the enemy, finding they were fruitless, from the caution with which they kept the weather-gage, Admiral Hood desisted from firing. His loss of men was very inconsiderable; but five of his ships suffered much from their excessive eagerness to bring on a close action, which had exposed them to the enemy's whole fire. Among those who fell in this engagement was Captain Nott, of the Centaur, an officer of acknowledged merit.

On the thirtieth of April, Admiral Hood made another effort to gain the wind of the enemy, in order to renew the fight; but after employing the whole day to that purpose ineffectually, on being apprized of the bad condition of several of his ships, he thought it most prudent to steer for the island of Antigua, to repair their damages. The French Admiral, on perceiving this motion, followed him with his whole fleet, and pressed so close upon his rear, that the British Admiral was compelled to make a stand for its protection; it was so resolute and well conducted, that notwithstanding his great superiority, no other advantage was gained by the enemy than remaining unattacked in sight of the British fleet.

After it had been sufficiently refitted, and joined by the ships under Admiral Rodney, he proceeded to Barbadoes, in order to be at hand to observe the movements of the enemy.

The Marquis de Bouille, Governor of Martinico, had, in the mean time, formed a project for surprizing St. Lucia, the situation of which enabled the British fleet to keep the former island in continual alarm, and to discover and counteract all the motions of the French. To this intent, on the night of the tenth of May, he landed a strong detachment

tachment at St. Lucia, and summoned the garrison to surrender. But though it was at this time far from numerous, the commanders, after returning a resolute answer to the message, prepared themselves with so much judgment and courage to receive the enemy, that they quickly found an obstinate resistance would be made.

On the twelfth Count de Grasse, at the head of twenty-five sail of the line, stood in for Gros Islet Bay, where he intended to cast anchor; but the fire from the batteries on shore obliged him to bear away without attempting it. The Marquis de Bouille was not more successful on his side. The dispositions made by General St. Leger were so advantageous, notwithstanding the smallness of the force under his command, that the French did not dare to proceed in their intended attack, and withdrew with the whole armament to Martinico.

To compensate for this failure, a large body of French troops was dispatched to effect a landing on the island of Tobago. On their appearance off the island on the twenty-third of May, an express being sent to Admiral Rodney, six ships of the line were ordered to its assistance, under Admiral Drake, with a reinforcement of troops, under General Skeene.--- Admiral Drake, on his arrival in sight of Tobago, discovered the whole French fleet, consisting of twenty-seven ships of the line, between him and the island. This rendering it impossible to fulfil his commission, he returned to Barbadoes.

In the mean time the French had landed their troops, to the number of three thousand regulars. The whole force collected to oppose them did not much exceed four hundred men, consisting chiefly of planters.

The great superiority of the enemy made it necessary for them to retire to a very strong eminence, from whence they could discern their motions, and command

command a view of the whole island. They were closely invested by the French on every side: but they defended themselves with so much vigour, that the enemy, exasperated at a resistance which they represented to the inhabitants as entirely useless, and proceeding from mere obstinacy, threatened to destroy their plantations and property, in case they continued it beyond the term of twenty-four hours.

But these threats did not in the least intimidate them. They persisted as resolutely as ever in throwing every possible obstruction in the way of the enemy. They defended the post to which they had retired during the space of eight days, though exposed to all the inconveniencies of the weather, from the want of covering.

A large reinforcement arriving from Martinico, with the Marquis de Bouille, accompanied with the whole French fleet, under the Count de Grasse, they were now so closely pressed on all sides, that very little hopes remained that they would be able to maintain their ground, especially after receiving notice that a body of troops intended for their assistance, had been obliged to put back, to avoid falling into the hands of the French.

This news did not however discourage them.— Resolving to hold out to the last extremity, they now prepared to quit the post they occupied, in order to take possession of another; as the enemy had by dint of numbers made themselves masters of several passages through which it would not be practicable to prevent them from penetrating to the ground they had hitherto so valiantly maintained.

Early in the morning of the first of June, the garrison began its retreat towards the place proposed; and before the enemy was apprized of this motion, had taken possession of a post of great strength and importance. The Marquis de Bouille, highly chagrined at being disappointed in his ex-

pectations of forcing them in their former post, resolved to put in execution the menaces that had been already held out to them.

He followed the garrison with all possible celebrity but finding they were so advantageously situated as to set his utmost efforts at defiance, he ordered some plantations to be set on fire, and threatened to renew the same orders at the expiration of every four hours, until the island was surrendered.

This execution of the dreadful menaces that had been made, though it did not stagger the resolution of some, who had determined to lose their all rather than submit, overcame the perseverance of the majority. They insisted that a treaty should be opened with the French commander; the military were of the same opinion; deeming any farther resistance of no utility, as the want of relief would certainly compel them at last to submit.

Governor Ferguson finding it impossible to prevent the determination to surrender from taking place, thought it most prudent, though he refused to concur in it at first, to interpose in making the best terms for the inhabitants he could in the present circumstances obtain. His mediation was so effectual, that the terms granted to them were highly favourable, being nearly the same as those that took place at the capitulation of Dominico.

As soon as Admiral Rodney was informed, that contrary to his expectations, Count de Grasse had sailed from Martinico, to support the attack upon Tobago, he weighed anchor immediately, and repaired with the utmost speed to that island; but found, on his arrival, on the fifth of June, that it had already surrendered two days before.

After receiving this intelligence, Admiral Rodney stood after the French fleet; which having descried towards the Grenadilla islands, on the afternoon of that day, he neared it considerably before sun-set;

sun-set : but their situation was such, as made it highly dangerous to attack them, from the great hazard of being entangled among the Grenadillas, and carried into the channel between Grenada and the Spanish main : here, from the excessive rapidity of the currents, the British fleet would have been driven far to leeward, while the French fleet, by anchoring in the harbour of that island, now in their possession, would have been able to regain its station to windward much more expeditiously than the former ; a circumstance that might have been attended with the loss of Barbadoes, before the British fleet could arrive in time to its relief.

As from the superiority of the French fleet, Admiral Rodney was induced to think it would risk an engagement, he kept to the windward of St. Vincent's during that night, and gave orders that all the lights of his fleet should be made as conspicuous as possible to the enemy, that in case they were desirous of engaging him, they might be sure their wishes would be complied with the next day.

But contrary to the desire and expectation of the British Admiral; at day-light next morning no enemy was in sight. They had tacked in the night, and withdrawn to Courland Bay, in Tobago. This was a heavy disappointment to the whole fleet.— Not doubting, that confiding in their great superiority, the French would not have receded from so marked a challenge, the ships had been cleared for action with the utmost alacrity, and both officers and seamen expressed an eagerness and impatience that promised the most vigorous exertions.

The loss of Tobago, however mortifying, was not an event of any decision, and did not seem to have raised the spirits of the enemy. They still continued, notwithstanding their superiority, to avoid an action with as much solicitude as ever ; and when they ventured out of their harbours, acted

with as much care and circumspection, as if their inferiority had been such as to expose them to every danger.

While the French were thus employed in the West Indies, their allies, the Spaniards, were endeavouring to recover those provinces on the continent of North America which they had lost in the preceding war. The success of Don Bernardo de Galvez at Mobile the foregoing year, encouraged him to plan an expedition for the present against Pensacola, the principal British settlement in West Florida.

In order to forward this design, he repaired to the Havannah, where great preparations were making for it: but an accident retarded it, similar to those that had been lately experienced in the British and French islands,—a dreadful hurricane assailed the Spanish fleet on its setting out for this expedition; four ships of the line were lost, besides many others, with all the people on board, to the amount of more than two thousand.

The damage received by the Spanish fleet was such, that it was obliged to put back to the Havannah, to be repaired. As soon as it was in a condition for sea, an embarkation was made of near eight thousand men; at the head of which, accompanied with five sail of the line, Don Bernardo de Galvez proceeded for Pensacola, where he arrived on the ninth of March, eighty-one.

Against this force, which was shortly after augmented by the arrival of ten ships of the line, and six frigates, General Campbell, who commanded at Pensacola, had hardly more than one thousand men to oppose, consisting of a few regulars and seamen, with the inhabitants. The entrance of the harbour, which was the principal object of defence, was guarded by two small armed vessels; but they were insufficient to second the batteries that had been

been erected for its protection; and these, without the assistance of some ships of force, were incompetent to the resistance of a vigorous attack.

Such was the condition of Pensacola when the Spaniards appeared before it. Notwithstanding the formidable strength brought by Don Bernardo de Galvez, he met with an opposition which he had not expected. Every inch of ground was disputed with the utmost obstinacy. The passage into the harbour was not forced without great difficulty; nor were the vessels taken that defended it; after setting fire to them, their companies withdrew to the garrison.

After entering the harbour, and effecting a landing, the Spaniards finding from the dispositions made by the garrison, that the most resolute defence was intended, were obliged to invest the place in form, and make their approaches with all due caution and regularity. The besieged, on the other hand, found them full employment; no opportunity was lost of interrupting their progress, by a continual and spirited fire, and by making occasional sallies; all of which were more or less successful, and struck at the same time the besiegers with astonishment, from the handfuls of men with which they were executed.

The Spanish General was the more incensed at this resistance, as he knew that no relief could arrive to the garrison, either by sea or land, adequate to the encounter of such a force as he commanded; and that, of course, all that could be done by the besieged was to prolong the date of their surrender. His troops were all regulars; the naval strength with him was under the command of Don Joseph Solano, one of the boldest and most expert seamen in the Spanish service; the siege was conducted by able engineers; and he had an artillery, to use the expression:

expression of his own officers, fit to have been employed against Gibraltar itself.

With all these advantages, such was the conduct and resolution of General Campbell, and the firmness and bravery with which he was seconded by his officers and men, as well as by Governor Chester, at the head of the inhabitants, that after the siege had been carried on without intermission near the space of two months, though the enemy was far from being deficient in spirit and activity, they saw little hopes of its speedy termination.

Despairing of making any effectual impression by means of their cannon, they had erected a battery of mortar-pieces, with which they bombarded a redoubt that commanded the main avenue to the place. On the morning of the eighth of May, a shell accidentally bursting open the door of the powder magazine under the redoubt, it was blown up, with the loss of near an hundred men, killed and wounded.

The enemy instantly advanced to profit of the disorder into which the garrison was thrown by so unforeseen an accident. Fortunately for the garrison, two flank-works remained unhurt, from both which they kept up so heavy a fire upon the assailants, that they were obliged to retire with great loss. This afforded leisure to carry off the wounded, with some of the artillery, and to spike the rest. The enemy, however, having recovered themselves, and preparing for a general storm, it was thought proper to abandon the flank-works, and withdraw into the body of the place.

The possession now taken by the enemy of those outworks gave them such advantages, that the place was no longer tenable. The situation of these outworks, on a rising ground, enabled them to command the battery opposite to their chief approach with their small arms, and to single out

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the men at their guns. In this extremity, honourable terms of capitulation were proposed to the Spanish General, to which he readily consented; and the place was surrendered to him on the tenth of May eighty-one, after a siege of two months complete.

The successes of Spain in this remote part of the world did not, however, compensate for the constant disappointment of all its efforts against Gibraltar. The siege of this important fortress was continued at a prodigious expence, but without making the least progres. No more had been accomplished by the fleet and army that invested it, than to reduce the garrison to great straits for want of a proper quantity of provisions; but this was an inconvenience to which it submitted with a firmness and alacrity truly astonishing, and highly meritorious.

From the departure of Admiral Rodney in the middle of February, the garrison waited till the month of October, without making any alteration in the usual rations; but as the winter was approaching, the apprehension of the danger and difficulty that might attend the sending of supplies at that time of the year, induced Governor Elliott to reduce the allowance of bread and of meat, and to make some other regulations necessary for enforcing the strictest œconomy in the article of food.

In the beginning of the year eighty-one, provisions began to be extremely scarce, through the expenditure of almost all that remained in the public stores, and the indefatigable vigilance of the enemy's cruizers, in cutting off the communication by sea. About the middle of February, the town bakers left off work, for want of flour; and many of the poorer sort wanted bread. At this time the price of fresh provisions was excessive. Small pigs

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sold at two guineas; turkeys at three; geese at thirty shillings; fowls and ducks at ten shillings; damaged biscuit a shilling the pound; pease eighteen pence; and all other necessaries in proportion. The scarcity of fuel was more felt than of any other article, as it sometimes happened to be hardly sufficient for the dressing of victuals.

The distresses of the garrison were well known in England, as well as the absolute necessity of relieving them without delay. But the numerous demands of assistance from the various quarters of the world, where the war was now waging, rendered this service, however indispensable, a matter of the greatest difficulty.

The fleets of France and Spain were at this period lying ready prepared in port, for the purpose of obstructing any succours to this fortress. The force at Brest was calculated at twenty-six sail of the line, and that at Cadiz at thirty.

To encounter this formidable armament, no greater strength could be collected than twenty-eight ships of the line; which indeed was no small effort, considering the prodigious exertions that Great Britain was at this hour making against such a number of enemies.

This fleet was commanded by the Admirals Darby, Digby, and Ross, all officers of great professional excellence. It was, however, much doubted whether they would be able to accomplish so arduous a design as the relieving of Gibraltar in the face of so formidable an opposition.

They sailed from Portsmouth about the middle of March eighty-one, with a convoy of four hundred merchantmen and transports, destined for the West and the East Indies. The necessity of taking in provisions detained them some time at Corke in Ireland; from whence they proceeded with the whole fleet for the places of their destination. The merchantmen

chantmen having left them, to continue their respective voyages, they steered directly for Cadiz, where they found the Spanish fleet moored in the harbour.

Great had been the threats of Spain, that its naval strength would crush that of Great Britain, were it to attempt the relief of Gibraltar. To this intent, the number of ships composing the fleet at Cadiz was highly magnified, and every kind of exaggeration used in order to deter the British Ministry from hazarding such a measure. The Spanish Admiral, Don Louis de Cordova, was ordered to cruize on the coasts of Spain and Portugal with the ostensible view of meeting and fighting the British fleet.

After keeping the sea about the space of three weeks, he was accidentally informed of its approach; upon which he withdrew expeditiously into Cadiz; sufficiently proving thereby to the world, how little he dared to look the English in the face upon terms of equality.

France, on the other hand, was so taken up with the vast projects that she had formed in the West Indies, North America, and the East, that she reserved her naval strength totally for those purposes; thinking, probably, that Spain ought to prove herself able to provide effectually for the safety of her own coasts.

12th April, 1781. The British fleet, in the mean time, conveyed the long-wanted supplies into Gibraltar. In this, however, it met with great obstruction from the besiegers. The gun-boats, already mentioned, were now much increased in number and strength of construction; and infested the bay in such a manner, as greatly to embarrass the embarkation of stores. As no vessels of the same kind had been yet prepared to oppose them,

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it was with much difficulty the mischief they intended could be prevented.

Their intention was to set fire to the store-ships. To this purpose, they approached them every morning in hazy weather, to the number of between twenty and thirty, several of them carrying mortar pieces. As they used both sails and oars, and withdrew on the rising of any breeze, they eluded all pursuit. They occasioned so much trouble, that several stout frigates were obliged to station themselves along the bay, for the protection of the shipping. This did not, however, hinder them from continuing their molestation. It was the greatest grievance to the British officers and seamen; as, notwithstanding their utmost vigilance and activity, they seldom could near these gun-boats sufficiently to do them any damage, while, from continual experience, those who managed them had acquired such habitual dexterity, as to know with the nicest exactness what position to take to do the most effectual execution on any part of the town or bay they had in view.

But these were inconsiderable motives of vexation compared to the great object now attained: Gibraltar was now completely relieved, and put into a state that would long enable it to bid defiance to the enemy. This too had been done in a manner equally honourable to Great Britain, and mortifying to Spain, as well as to France, of both which it had been the boast, that Admiral Rodney's expedition to Gibraltar in the preceding year, would be the last that the English would ever dare to attempt.

While Europe expressed universal astonishment at the invincible spirit with which the British nation had undertaken and atchieved an exploit of so arduous a nature, the Court of Spain, incensed at this unexpected disappointment, determined on the prosecution of its intent with additional exertions.—

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The works before the town were carried on with more vigour than ever, and the most tremendous preparations were made to make it feel the resentment of an exasperated enemy.

Their batteries were mounted with guns of the heaviest metal, and with mortar-pieces of the largest dimensions. The number of the former amounted to near two hundred, and of the latter to above fourscore. The discharge from this prodigious artillery was dreadful. It continued day and night, with hardly any intermission, three full weeks, during which one hundred thousand pounds of gunpowder were consumed, and four or five thousand shot or shells were thrown into the town every twenty-four hours.

The narrow extent of the spot upon which this shower of destruction fell, was too much exposed to escape its effects. The houses, in number about five hundred, were mostly destroyed, and the inhabitants, computed at more than three thousand, experienced every hardship that could arise from the destruction of their dwellings: several of them were killed, and they were all constrained to remove out of the town, and to take shelter at a distance under tents, with such accommodations as could be contrived in such a scene of confusion and horror.

On the departure of the fleet, numbers of them took that opportunity of leaving the town, and going home on board the transports. Many of them had lived long in the place, in comfortable, and some in genteel circumstances, who were now reduced to great distress. Governor Elliott's treatment of them was very humane and compassionate: they were allowed a free passage to England, and were supplied with provisions for the voyage.

In the beginning of June, the enemy had relaxed considerably in their firing, seldom exceeding

fix hundred shot in a day. They continued gradually to diminish it so remarkably, that towards the end of August, they seldom fired in the day, and only discharged six or seven, and sometimes not above three shot in the night.

But in default of the batteries at land, the gun-boats proved a terrible annoyance. They renewed their attacks every day, and seldom failed doing more or less of execution, which though not material, served nevertheless, to keep the garrison in perpetual alarms.

In order to restrain them, a battery of guns peculiarly calculated to throw their shot to a great distance, was erected as near as possible to the enemy. As it reached their very camp, it was determined to open it upon them as often as the gun-boats made their attacks. This being soon perceived by the enemy, they thought it prudent to desist in some measure from a mode of hostility which they found was constantly productive of another no less destructive to themselves.

By the close of November, the besiegers had, with immense toil and expence, brought their works to that state of perfection they intended.—The care and ingenuity which had been employed upon them were extraordinary; and it was generally expected that they would be accompanied with the end proposed. The best engineers in France and Spain had united their respective abilities upon this occasion, and both kingdoms were filled with the most sanguine expectations of their success.

While Europe stood, as it were, in suspense concerning the fate of Gibraltar, and many imagined, from the prodigious efforts of the besiegers, it could not make a much longer resistance, the British Governor was meditating in what manner to overthrow at once their long cherished hopes, by the

total destruction of what had required so much time, skill, and labour to accomplish.

In the night of the twenty-seventh of November, a chosen body of two thousand men was assembled, in order to sally from the town, and destroy the enemy's advanced works and batteries. They marched out with great order and silence, about two o'clock in the morning, under the command of Brigadier-General Ross. They proceeded with the utmost speed to the enemy's works, which they attacked and stormed with the most astonishing rapidity. The enemy were thrown into such confusion, that they fled on every side. The guns and mortars on the batteries were all spiked. The artillery-men, artificers, and sailors, exerted themselves with so much vigour, that in the space of an hour, the magazines of powder were blown up, the store-houses of arms, ammunition, and military implements of every kind, and all the works that had been constructed, were set on fire, and totally consumed. The damage done to the enemy upon this occasion was prodigious: it was computed at near two millions sterling.

This bold and well conducted action struck the enemy with a surprize and dread of the resolution and dexterity of the besieged, from which it was evident by their subsequent operations, they were a long time recovering. The hopes entertained by their best officers began to diminish. Nothing but the disgrace of abandoning an enterprize on which the honour of the Spanish nation seemed in a manner to depend, prompted them to continue it, after this decisive proof of the precariousness of all their efforts and exertions.

The discouragement occasioned throughout Spain by this event was no less visible. It affected all classes in such a manner as to excite a general dependency; to which, indeed, the avariciousness of the

Spanish naval commanders to risk an encounter with the British fleet powerfully contributed.

Nor was the Court of Madrid backward to complain that France had been very deficient in her promises to support the Spanish fleet in so necessary a measure as that of intercepting the supplies destined for Gibraltar. To this neglect in their ally, they attributed the continuation of the siege, and, of consequence, the losses and disappointments that were continually attending the army that was besieging it, and the little hopes that now remained of their being able to effect its reduction.

C H A P. LIX.

*Proceedings in Parliament.—Transactions in Holland.—
Naval Operations against the Dutch.*

1781.

THE Parliamentary debates upon those various subjects which were the consequences of the American War, employed, as usual, the attention of the public. But they were not carried on with that energy and perseverance during this session, which had attended them in the last. Opposition was in some measure grown weary of a contention which was evidently fruitless, and produced infinite pains and struggles to no purpose. The nation itself was become careless and inattentive in many respects to the proceedings of Parliament in all cases of this nature, from a conviction that whatever were the desires of the public, they would be contradicted and slighted, if opposite to those of ministry.

It was an object of no small surprise, that while meetings were held in so many counties, cities, and towns, for the purpose of reprobating Parliamentary measures, and petitioning the legislature for a total change in the political system of this country, the members chosen by those very places, should act and vote in manifest and constant opposition to the sense of their constituents.

The famous plan of reformation proposed by Mr. Burke the preceding year, had been received by the nation at large with the highest approbation and applause. The people were fully sensible of the indispensable necessity of using the strictest economy, in the critical circumstances wherein the

realm was placed. The general argument was, that our enemies having set us the example, it would be the height of impolicy not to follow it. The very considerable addition expected from this plan to the national income, had given it a popularity which it was imagined would induce ministry to coincide with it. Notwithstanding the rejection it had met with from the last Parliament, it was still hoped by numbers, that from its evident utility, it would find, on mature consideration, a majority to support it in the present.

In compliance with these expectations, Mr. Burke ventured again on the fifteenth of February, eighty-one, to bring it forward, and to recommend it with every argument which his knowledge could suggest, and his eloquence could enforce. The dangerous and expensive war in which we were engaged with so many open or clandestine enemies, the prodigious efforts we were continually obliged to make to face them in every part of the globe, as they were obvious motives to alledge; so they were insisted upon with his usual energy.

He took notice, at the same time, that in so perilous a season as the present, such a scheme as he now proposed ought to have proceeded from the ministers themselves. They knew the wants of the nation, and ought therefore to have been the ~~first~~ to administer to them, through those means which from their station and influence were more particularly within their reach. Instead of discouraging this scheme, it behoved them to second it with all their power, and to give it that official weight, without which it could not succeed.

He addressed himself upon this occasion to the Members of the House, as newly chosen by the people, to rectify the mistakes of their predecessors, and to avoid being guilty of those misdemeanors, and neglect in the discharge of their duty, which

which had cast an odium upon their memory. He reminded them in the strongest terms of the remarkable resolutions that had been passed concerning the Influence of the Crown. He represented them as a legacy bequeathed by the last Parliament to the nation, by way of atoning for that improper subserviency to the will of ministers, of which it had been guilty in so many instances.

These resolutions it was now the duty and business of the present representatives of the people, to stand by with firmness and fidelity : the intention of passing them not having yet been fulfilled, it remained now to give them that virtue and efficacy to which they were entitled, from their evident and acknowledged propriety. As the dissolution of the late Parliament had prevented it from compleating what it had so judiciously begun, it behoved the present to accomplish it in the stead of those who had lead the way in so salutary a work : were they to neglect it, the public would then know, to whom they were to impute the failure of a scheme, to which they so ardently wished all manner of success.

After raising the just hopes and expectations of the people, it would be a disappointment, which they would have reason never to forgive, were they to see them frustrated ; but this he confided would not be case. The character of those who composed the House, was too much at stake, to disoblige their constituents in so reasonable a demand, as that of easing their burdens in a manner that was calculated to produce so much public benefit, with so little detriment to private individuals.

The violence with which the majority of the nation had complained of the pressures it felt, had been the principal motive that had inclined the last Parliament to adopt the resolutions now laid before them ; but it would be much more honourable and

meritorious in the present, to give them countenance and protection, from a conviction of their propriety, than to consent to them merely through dint of importunity and clamour.

Administration having determined to oppose with the most invincible spirit, that multitude of enemies which was perpetually increasing, it behoved them to provide for the contest which they were so resolutely bent not to give up. One of the means of doing this effectually, was to convince the public, that no class, no rank, was exempted from participating in those efforts and labours for the common good, which were recommended to the cheerful acquiescence of the nation, with so much warmth and earnestness.

The principal example of perseverance and suffering for the welfare of the state, ought indisputably to be given by those who ruled it. The conspicuity of their station carried a force and influence, which commanded universal imitation. While they led the way, none would refuse to follow. It was from them that nations derived the spirit and magnanimity, which enabled them to surmount obstacles, and become formidable to their enemies. It was therefore incumbent upon them to display that fortitude in encountering difficulties, which they so strenuously required in others.

Economy was now become more necessary than at any former period, as the kingdom had never experienced such distress as at the present. Whoever wished to see the king great and potent, ought to advise him to retrench every unnecessary department in his house, and apply what was saved in this manner, to the maintenance and augmentation of his fleets and armies. It was the duty of the House of Commons, even on a supposition they were entirely the creatures and dependents of the crown, to represent to their Sovereign, how much it

it was incumbent on him to use the strictest frugality, in order to render himself powerful and dreaded by his enemies. Economy was the foundation of success; it produced wealth and strength, and gave life and vigour to all great designs.

Such was the substance of the various arguments used by Mr. Burke, to support the plan of reformation he had so much at heart. He addressed himself to the ministry on this occasion with great earnestness and fervour, entreating them to be candid and explicit in their assistance, or opposition of the scheme he once more ventured to propose. If they meant to befriend his endeavours, he requested them to do it effectually, but if they meant to thwart him, he desired they would be expeditious and decisive, that no time, nor labour, might be lost through fallacious expectations of unintended favour and concurrence.

In consequence of this representation, he moved that a bill might be brought in for the better regulation of the civil establishment, by limiting pensions, and suppressing several useless offices, and employing the sums arising from such retrenchment, to the service of the public.

The ministry, from motives of decency, did not oppose the bill on its first introduction; but when it came to a second reading, it was rejected by a majority of two hundred and thirty three, to one hundred and ninety; and a resolution passed to put it off six months.

Thus ended for the present, an attempt, which from the popularity with which it was favoured, had, for a while, been spoken of as a measure no less promissory than highly deserving of success.

The next object of parliamentary discussion was the loan to defray the expences of the coming year, amounting to the sum of twelve millions. Ministry was accused of having made a disadvantage-

ous bargain for the public; as a proof of which it was stated, that the price of the new stock was ten per cent above par.

It was objected in the House by Mr. Fox, that the money might have been borrowed upon much better terms; and that the manner of obtaining the loan was still more blamable in a political consideration, as it threw near a million into the hands of the minister, to dispose of at his pleasure, without any parliamentary controul; the evident consequence of which, would be a distribution of it among those who supported his measures.

The reply of ministry was, that though the loan was procured upon advantageous terms to the lenders; it could not be considered as injurious to the public, when the difficulty of levying money at any rate was duly weighed. The times required great condescension from government in the article of borrowing money. Those who possessed it knew how much it was wanted, and availed themselves of the necessities of the state accordingly.

One of the principal allegations against the minister upon this occasion, was that he had refused a loan of as much out of no less a sum than thirty eight millions, as he might have chosen to borrow at no more than five per cent. interest. The offers came from persons of noted wealth and responsibility, but he declined it in favour of those, whom he looked upon as more manageable and subvertient to his views.

The minister's answer to this charge was that in his acceptance of offers, he had been partial to no set of individuals whatever; but had made as beneficial an agreement as lay in his power, with those whom he thought able to fulfil it, without respect of persons.

The bills to exclude contractors from parliament, and to restrain officers in the revenue from voting at parliamentary

parliamentary elections, were again proposed this session; the first by Sir Philip Jennings Clerke, the second by Mr. Crewe, the original movers of both; but they met with the same rejection as formerly.

Nor were the promoters of the petition from the English counties more fortunate. A delegation had been appointed by these in order to inforce their demands. They met in London to the number of near forty, and prepared a remonstrance to the House of Commons, comprehending the substance of the petition already presented.

But the title of delegates proved so alarming to numbers even of such as wished well to the cause they were appointed to maintain, that the delegates themselves came to a resolution to drop it, and to act in no other light than as private individuals.

In this capacity, they drew up a petition which was laid before the House of Commons. Still, however the denomination of delegates was brought into severe notice, and condemned as an assumption of authority incompatible with that of the House; the Members of which were strenuously asserted to be the only lawful Delegates of the people of England. All others were unconstitutional; and to connive even at the existence of them, was submitting to the setting up of a power in this country, independent of the supreme authority of the state.

In consequence of the unfavourable idea in which they were viewed, their petition met with the most violent opposition from the ministerial party, and was rejected by a majority of two hundred and twelve, to one hundred and thirty-five.

Towards the close of the session, an attempt was made to bring forward a plan of reconciliation with America. The immense variety of arguments that had originated from this topic, was again renewed upon this occasion, by those who opposed, or seconded

conded the motion. Among other allegations, the inutility of continuing a war, wherein victory or defeat were equally detrimental, was strongly insisted upon. The action at Guildford between the Royalists and the Americans, was adduced as an unanswerable proof, that the successes of the British arms in the field, produced none of the consequences usually attending the gain of battles. Had Lord Cornwallis been routed, he could hardly have acted otherwise than he found himself compelled to do, in consequence of that engagement. He had been obliged to retreat before the enemy he had beaten, and to seek a place where to shelter his troops from the attacks and incursions of those whom he had defeated, and whose country he had over-run. If such were the fruits of victory in America, the sooner war could be terminated there, the more safe and prudent such a measure must be acknowledged. After long and animated debates, the motion was rejected by a great majority.

In the mean time, the rupture with Holland, and the losses incurred by the Dutch, occasioned great discontents and complaints in some of the Provinces: that of Zealand in particular, which from its commercial interests, was more closely connected with Great Britain than the others, expressed a strong averseness to the hostile disposition they profest. It presented a memorial to the States General, signifying its opinion, that a negociation should be set on foot, in order to put an end to the difference between Great Britain and the Republic, and restore the harmony that had so long subsisted between them, and earnestly requesting that such a measure might be speedily adopted.

This memorial was strongly reinforced by the merchants and trading people of the city of Middleburgh, the capital of Zealand. They repre-
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sented

fented in the most free and explicit terms, that the English and Dutch could not go to war with each other, but to their mutual injury : they alledged the long and close intimacy between the British nation, and the people of Zealand : this province was full of English traders ; the number of those who were settled in Middleburgh alone, amounted to near two thousand. A war with England must therefore prove an event highly destructive to them, as it would indeed deeply affect the interests of the whole Republic.

These remonstrances, however well founded, made no impression on the States. The French faction was now become so powerful, that all reasoning and argument was over-ruled, and the resolution taken to prosecute hostilities against Great Britain with the utmost vigour.

They applied to the courts of Petersburgh, Stockholm, and Copenhagen, claiming their assistance in virtue of the compact of neutrality entered into with those powers ; and alledging, that the declaration of war on the part of Great Britain, was solely occasioned by their accession to the treaty of neutrality.

But their solicitations, though very urgent and pressing, did not produce the effect that was intended. They had demanded an immediate reinforcement of ships of war ; but the jealousy entertained of the British power, was not greater than the dread of exposing themselves to its resentment, in the different members of the armed neutrality. They contented themselves with remaining on the defensive ; and were not in the least inclined to give any further provocation to Great Britain. Perhaps too, they thought the combination already formed against it, was fully sufficient for the purposes they had in view ; and that by adding to it, that balance of naval power, for the preservation

preservation of which it had been framed, might, contrary to their intentions, incline too much on the other side.

The situation of the seven United Provinces at this juncture, was very different from what it had been upon former emergencies of this nature. Notwithstanding the Dutch are incontestably a very brave people, they were now, through a long disuse of arms, become very ill adapted, and unprepared for war. Relying too much on the difficulties wherein Great Britain was involved, they imagined that an open and avowed declaration of hostilities against them, was a measure they had not the least reason to apprehend. Britain ought rather to fear they might themselves lead the way in taking such a step.

The naval force of the seven United Provinces bore at this time no proportion to its splendour in the days of yore, when it was able to meet the united strength of England and France on the ocean, and was equally the terror and the admiration of their enemies. Fourscore years were now elapsed, since they had been under the necessity of prosecuting any naval war. During this long interval, their shipping had been totally engrossed by the occupations of peace and commerce; and Britain was the last power, against which it had been expected, they should be first compelled to draw the sword.

On a review of their marine, it was found very inadequate to the ideas entertained by the rest of Europe. They were fully aware of the greatness and eminence of the peril to which their trade was evidently exposed, from the vast strength of the enemy with whom they had to contend, together with his proximity and the enterprising nature of his disposition. But notwithstanding the importance of preserving their commerce, the only foundation of their power and prosperity, they were

were unable at this time to equip any more than eleven ships of the line; two of these carried seventy guns and five hundred and fifty men, the nine others sixty guns and four hundred and fifty men. The remainder of their fleet consisted of fifteen ships of fifty guns, and three hundred men, two of forty and two hundred and fifty, fourteen of thirty-six and two hundred and thirty, thirteen of twenty and one hundred and twenty, besides some armed vessels of lesser force.

This was but a shadow of their ancient power at sea; but depending on the support of the enemies to Great Britain, they were not without hopes to make head against such detached parts of her maritime forces, as she could spare from the necessary defence of her numerous possessions in so many parts of the globe.

France at the same time, as a further encouragement, promised to take their distant settlements under her own care and protection, and, to exert her utmost for the recovering of those that had been taken by the English. These settlements were yet in a state of infancy; but bid fair under good management to become in time of the utmost value, especially should they remain in the hands of such active and spirited possessors as the English. The yearly produce of the two colonies of Essequibo and Demerary, was already rated at ten thousand hogsheads of sugar, five millions of pounds of coffee, eight hundred thousand pounds of cotton, besides a large proportion of rum, cocoa and indigo. This was considered as no more than a beginning. The soil of both was rich and luxuriant in the highest degree, and promised, when arrived to a proper cultivation, to exceed any European plantation in that part of the world.

In order to procure to themselves as many friends and favourers as possible and to remove the

the imputation of impolicy and inconsiderateness, the States General published a long and much laboured manifesto, whercin they endeavoured to justify their conduct towards Great Britain in the present circumstances. But the multiplicity of arguments and reasonings with which it was fraught, did by no means convince the clear sighted, of the rectitude of acceding to the confederation formed against Great Britain, in conjunction with the House of Bourbon. This was in fact adding strength to the compact framed between the members of that already too potent family, whose enmity they had much more reason to dread than that of the British nation, and of whose ambition they had more than once had ample experience.

One of the first objects in contemplation among the mercantile classes in Holland, was the interception of the fleet, that was convéyed to England the spoils of Statia. Preparations were made to that intent; but they were not ready at the time proposed; and fortune threw this rich prize into other hands.

Intelligence arriving in France, that this valuable fleet was on its way homewards, escorted only by four ships of the line, twice as many were dispatched under M. de la Motte Piquet, who fell in with it on the second of May eighty-one, and captured more than half the convoy. The remainder took shelter in the nearest ports of Ireland.

The British ministry was meditating on the other hand, in what manner to reduce most effectually the power of Holland. The readiest method to compass this end, was obviously by attacking its foreign settlements; which from a long duration of peace, were not sufficiently prepared to resist a sudden and vigorous attempt.

To

To this intent a squadron was fitted out, consisting of a seventy-four a sixty-four and three fifty gun ships, with some frigates and other vessels. A body of three thousand men in transports accompanied it, Commodore Johnston commanded the squadron, and General Meadows the troops.

The object of this expedition was the Cape of Good Hope; by depriving the Dutch of which, their communication with the East Indies would have been materially interrupted, if not in a manner cut off. Alarmed at the danger of losing this important possession, they applied to the court of France, for timely assistance against the design, which, they doubted not, was in agitation in England.

France being little less interested than Holland itself, in the preservation of this place, readily exerted itself for the protection of it against Great Britain. M. de Suffrein, an officer of great courage, sailed immediately with five ships of the line, beside frigates, and a body of land forces to oppose the British armament.

Commodore Johnston had in his way to the Cape, stopped at the Cape Verd Islands, to wood and water his ships, and refresh his men. He now lay at anchor in Port Praya in the island of St. Jago. So little was the approach of an enemy suspected, that numbers belonging to the troops and squadron, were at that time on shore, employed in occupations relative to the shipping, or from motives of relaxation.

On the morning of the sixteenth of April, the French squadron under M. de Suffrein was descried coming round a point at the eastern extremity of the harbour. On this discovery, signals were expeditiously thrown out for the people ashore, to hasten on board, and every preparation was made to receive the enemy.

Notwithstanding

Notwithstanding the British squadron was completely surprised on this occasion, it stood the attack of a much superior force, with a coolness and resolution, at which the French were equally astonished and perplexed; as they had promised themselves an easy victory from the inferiority of the English, and the disorder in which they found them.

M. de Suffrein at the head of his line of battle ships, penetrated into the midst of the British shipping, which including East Indiamen and transports, amounted to about forty sail. Three of the French ships dropped their anchors, and commenced a heavy cannonade; which was returned with great spirit from every ship in the British fleet, that could bring its guns to bear upon them; the East India men particularly seconded the ships of war with great promptitude and effect.

While M. de Suffrein lay at anchor engaging the fleet, his two other line of battle ships ranged along the harbour, directing their fire where it could do most execution. The fight was continued in this manner during an hour; when one of the three French ships at anchor, having lost her captain, the crew cut her cable and quitted her station. M. de Suffrein's own ship was obliged to sheer off in the same manner: the third after losing all her masts, was towed off in a most shattered condition, and did not effect her escape without the utmost difficulty.

They were pursued in their retreat by Commodore Johnston, who used his utmost efforts to overtake them; but he was prevented from continuing the pursuit far, by the inferiority of the force he had to follow and encounter them, the detriment it had received in action, the lateness of the hour at which he was able to stand out to sea after them, and above all, the danger of being carried out of

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the track of his destination, in the very uncertain quest of a flying enemy.

Thus ended a conflict, wherein the French had not unreasonably promised themselves the fullest success, when it is considered at what a disadvantage they had taken the English. The honour acquired by these in facing and repelling, upon so short a notice, an enemy every way so superior, was acknowledged to be extraordinary, and made no small impression on those who were competent judges of the uncommon efforts of activity and valour, which they must have exerted upon so critical an emergency.

Having repaired the damages received in this engagement, the British squadron left Port Praya, on the prosecution of its original plan. Some of the best sailing frigates were dispatched to explore the situation of the enemy. They had the good fortune to capture a Dutch East Indiaman, laden with warlike stores and provisions, and a large sum of money for the settlements.

They learned at the same time, that M. de Suffrein with a fleet of transports was arrived at the Cape, and had landed a very considerable body of troops for the protection of that Dutch colony. The French had put it into a strong state of defence, and furnished it with a numerous garrison, which, added to the strength already there, exceeded that which was destined to attack it.

On receiving this intelligence, the British commanders thought it would be imprudent to persist in the design that had been formed against that place. In order, however, not to return home without having annoyed the enemy, the armament proceeded to the Bay of Saldana, lying about forty miles north of the Cape, where they had been informed, that a number of Dutch East Indiamen lay, that were homeward bound, and waited the

arrival of some French ships of force, before they durst continue their voyage.

Commodore Johnston having with great industry and personal exertion, fully reconnoitred their situation, entered the Bay on the twenty-first of July, and surprised them, before they were able to accomplish the destruction of their ships, which they had intended sooner than suffer them to fall into his hands. Four out of five were taken, and preserved from the flames, through the courage and dexterity of the seamen. They proved very valuable prizes; none being under a thousand tons burden: three came from China, and one from Bengal.

An occurrence of a singular nature happened on this occasion at Saldana. Two eastern princes, detained in captivity at this place, through the cruel maxims of policy adopted by the Dutch, escaped from their confinement, and seized the opportunity now offered them, of putting themselves under the protection of the British commanders. They were the sovereigns of Ternate and Tidore, two spice islands in the Indian sea, and had from motives of jealousy been deposed, and banished from their own country to this part of the world, where they had been treated with great indignity.

The news of these transactions, added greatly to the clamours of those people in Holland who disapproved of an inimical conduct towards Great Britain. The adverse party, however, took occasion from thence, to inforce the necessity of using the most strenuous endeavours, to prevent any further disasters; and to make head against the preparations that were now carrying on in England, in order to cut off their communication with the south of Europe, and intercept their trade with the Baltic. The deprivation of this last, especially, would reduce them to the greatest distress. It would at once

once ruin their marine, as it was from thence only they could be supplied with naval stores: nor would it prove less injurious in a still more essential respect, by stopping up the channel through which the seven United Provinces were almost wholly furnished with the quantity of corn necessary for the subsistence of their inhabitants.

The critical situation of the Dutch was well understood in England. The weakness of their marine, and the difficulty of putting it on a respectable footing were well known; but the immense weight of hostile power, against which Great Britain was obliged to bear up on every side, precluded those exertions, of which the utility was apparent, from being carried to a sufficient extent, for the full accomplishment of the design proposed.

It was not without great dint of management, that a squadron was provided for the purpose of watching the motions of the Dutch on their coast. They were employed in equipping a number of their stoutest ships, for the protection of a large fleet of merchantmen, bound to the Northern Sea. The command of them was given to Admiral Zoutman, a resolute and experienced seaman. The force he had, consisted of eight ships of the line, from seventy four to fifty four guns, ten frigates, and some other armed vessels. Most of their frigates were very large, and carried an uncommon weight of metal.

The British squadron was commanded by Admiral Hyde Parker, a veteran officer, of noted intrepidity. He was, at this time, convoying the homeward bound trade from the Baltic, amounting to upwards of an hundred sail. On the 5th of August, he fell in with the Dutch squadron on the Dogger Bank, accompanying a numerous fleet of merchantmen going to the Baltic. As soon as Admiral Parker had provided for the safety of his con-

voy, by detaching most of his frigates for its protection, he bore away to the enemy. His strength consisting of an old eighty-gun ship, that carried no heavier metal than a fifty, an old sixty, that had been discharged, but lately refitted for service, two seventy-fours, a sixty-four, and a fifty ; to which he was obliged to add a frigate of forty-four guns, in order to supply the inequality of his line of battle in number to that of the enemy.

The action began at eight in the morning, within less than musket-shot distance. It lasted near four hours, with equal bravery on each side. The fire from the English squadron was kept up with uncommon spirit, and did dreadful execution ; some of the ships discharged above two thousand shot. The Dutch frigates seconded their line with great resolution, by taking such positions, as enabled them to rake the British shipping ; which, for want of an adequate proportion of frigates, could not assail the enemy in the like manner.

But, notwithstanding this deficiency, the Dutch frigates were, in a short time, silenced, and compelled to withdraw. In the mean time, both squadrons had received so much damage, that about noon they were become equally unmanageable. The British Admiral used his utmost skill to keep the ships in a line, and to continue the action ; but found it impracticable. The Dutch were in the same situation. After laying to a considerable time near each other, the Dutch having suffered most, did not think it adviseable to renew the engagement, and in order to save the convoy, of which they had charge, and which was of immense value, they took the resolution to bear away with it to the Texel.

But though the Dutch squadron effected an escape, it was in so shattered a condition, that it could hardly be preserved from sinking. It was with

with the utmost difficulty brought into port by the help of the many frigates that fortunately attended it. One of the largest ships, mounting seventy guns, went to the bottom in the night after the action ; and most of the rest were rendered totally unserviceable.

Such was the issue of this celebrated engagement, the first that had happened between the English and the Dutch for upwards of a century. The valour and emulation displayed by both parties was in no wise inferior to that which had been exerted by their respective ancestors, when contending for the empire of the ocean, in the days of Cromwell and Charles the Second.

The slain and wounded on board of the British squadron, amounted to about four hundred and fifty, among whom were several officers of very superior merit ; but the same list on board of the Dutch ships, though endeavoured to be concealed, was well known to exceed a thousand.

The victory was indisputably on the side of the British Admiral. He remained with his squadron on the place of action after the enemy had quitted it. The Dutch squadron was obliged to abandon to their own care the merchantmen under its convoy, and these were compelled to drop the prosecution of their voyage, and make the best of their way to their separate homes.

This was the severest disappointment that could have befallen the Dutch ; in this fleet were centered the hopes and resources of the mercantile classes, which had been at a vast expence in fitting it out for its usual destination to the northern parts of Europe : they now saw themselves totally excluded from that principal fund of their commercial opulence, and obliged, to their great mortification, to have recourse to the assistance of France for protection on their own coasts.

The States General of the Seven United Provinces, were fully sensible of all these calamities : but they prudently buried them in silence, and adverted only to the necessity of reviving the courage of the public, and preventing any popular despondency. The valour of those officers and men who had fought in the late action was extolled in the warmest terms ; honours and rewards were decreed to them in the most ample and generous manner, and nothing was forgotten to impress the world with the highest sense of their merit, and to excite a spirit of emulation throughout the people.

The glory and success of this engagement were duly acknowledged in England : but heavy complaints were made that a sufficient force had not been assigned to Admiral Parker for the purposes that might have been accomplished on this occasion. Had his squadron been properly reinforced, which it was asserted might have been done, no doubt was entertained, from his known bravery and abilities, that a total destruction, or capture of the Dutch squadron and convoy, would have been the consequence,

On the return of the British squadron to the Nore, the service done to the public by the Admiral, was noticed in the most distinguished manner. The king honoured him with a visit, and treated him with those marks of attention and regard to which he was so eminently intitled.

During the remainder of the year, the ports of Holland were completely blocked up, and their trade intercepted from the most beneficial quarters. The Dutch who had not for a century experienced any of the distresses arising from a naval war, now felt them to a great extent. The commonalty, upon which of course they chiefly fell, was loud and ungovernable in its murmurs ; and it was for some time

time imagined, that the hardships under which it laboured, would have produced internal commotions of a dangerous nature. Certain it is, that no little alarm was excited, and that the discontents were so general, that suspicions of that kind did not appear entirely void of foundation.

C H A P. LX.

The French defeated at Jersey.—Siege of Minorca.—Naval Operations in the Channel.

1781.

NEVER had the intrigues of France been so successful against Great Britain as in the present war. She had contrived to kindle an unextinguishable flame in the British colonies. She had persuaded Spain, against the clear interest of that monarchy, to unite with her in asserting their independence. She had involved the seven United Provinces in a quarrel with their ancient and surest ally. She had drawn all Europe into a confederacy for the destruction of the naval power of this country, and had deprived it of all its allies, and almost of all its well-wishers.

In the midst of this storm, Britain seemed, however, to brave its enemies, not only by the greatness of the spirit with which she encountered them, but no less by the prodigious multiplicity of her resources. In the beginning of the year Eighty-one, the maritime strength of all Europe was drawn out against her; but the list of her fleets and armies afforded them no reason to hope that her power was on the decline. Her internal defence was provided for in such a manner, as precluded all expectations of making the least impression upon this island. She had numerous forces in the East and West Indies, and was making the most vigorous efforts in America. Her navy was on the most formidable footing, consisting of no less than four hundred and thirty vessels, in most excellent condition, and manned with the best and bravest seamen

In Europe, even by the confession of her very enemies.

The fleets of France, Spain and Holland did hardly more than equal those of Great Britain in number, but were far inferior to them in goodness of construction. The sailors, those of Holland excepted, were chiefly composed of landsmen, unused to, and averse to that element on which they were compelled to serve. France, with all its exertions, did not reckon more than two hundred and sixty-four vessels of all rates; and Spain not upwards of one hundred and twenty-four; Holland counted but sixty.

The residue of European marine in actual commission among those powers who formed the armed neutrality, amounted to no more than eighty ships of all fizes. Of those, twenty-nine belonged to Russia, thirty to Sweden, and twenty-five to Denmark. Such were the estimates of the naval force of the maritime powers in Europe, about the commencement of the year eighty-one.

France in the mean time was meditating how to avail herself of the advantages accruing from the potent confederacy in her favour. She had hitherto been foiled in every enterprize of moment. Saving some inconsiderable successes in the West Indies, her arms had been worsted every where. Notwithstanding the parade with which her fleets, in conjunction with those of Spain, had appeared on the British coast, nothing of the least consequence had hitherto been effected. The only attempt she had ventured to make in the channel, was on the island of Jersey, lying in sight of her own shore; and in that she had completely failed.

The remembrance of this failure, and the disgrace of having manifested to the world her inability to dispossess the English of an isle situated at her very doors, induced her at the opening of this year, to repeat an attempt, which Europe testifi-
ed

ed its utmost surprize, that France should ever have discontinued till she had succeeded.

The person pitched upon to conduct this enterprise, was the Baron de Rullecourt, a man of courage, but of a fierce and violent disposition. He had been second in command upon the preceding attempt. The force entrusted to him consisted of two thousand chosen men. With those he embarked in very tempestuous weather, hoping, from this circumstance, that as an invasion would not be expected, he might be able to surprize the garrison.

Many of his transports being dispersed by the storm, he was obliged to seek shelter with the remainder among some islands, in the proximity of Jersey. As soon as the weather grew calmer, he seized the opportunity of a dark night, to effect a landing at a place called Grouville, where he made prisoners a party of militia. From hence he proceeded with the utmost diligence to St. Helier's, the capital of the island, about three miles distant : he came upon it so unexpectedly, that he seized on a body of men that guarded it, together with the commanding officer and the magistrates of the island.

He then drew up a capitulation, the terms of which were, that the island should be forthwith surrendered to France, and the garrison be sent to England. He required instant compliance, threatening, upon refusal, immediate destruction to the town. The Deputy Governor and Magistrates represented to him, that being in his power, no authority of theirs could any longer be valid, and that the troops could of course refuse obedience to them. But the French commander persisting in his requisition, and menaces, the capitulation was signed, in order to prevent him from carrying them into execution.

Having gained this point, Baron Rullecourt advanced to Elizabeth castle, near the town, which he summoned to surrender in virtue of the capitulation

lation signed by the Deputy Governor, whom he compelled to accompany him; but the garrison returned him a peremptory refusal, and made so vigorous a discharge of their artillery upon him that he was obliged to withdraw into the town.

The British troops stationed in the island, on being apprized of what was passing, assembled in the mean while from every quarter, under the command of Major Pierson; who on being required by the French commander to submit, returned for answer, that if the French themselves did not lay down their arms within twenty minutes, he would attack them.

In consequence of this message, after making a very able disposition of his troops, he charged the enemy with so much impetuosity, that in less than half an hour they were totally routed, and driven from the houses they had occupied, into the market-place, where they endeavoured to make a stand.

Baron Rullecourt enraged at a resistance, which he had not expected, forgot the magnanimity for which the French officers are so justly renowned, so far as to force the captive Governor to attend him to the spot of action, declaring that he should partake of the same danger as himself: that gentleman was compelled to stand by his side during the conflict in the market-place: but it was quickly terminated; the French were soon broken on all sides, the Baron himself mortally wounded, and the next in command obliged to deliver up himself and his party prisoners of war, in order to avoid being cut to pieces.

The splendor of this success was greatly clouded by the death of that gallant young officer, to whose conduct it was chiefly owing. Major Pierson unhappily fell by one of the last discharges from the French. He was but in the twenty-fifth year of his age. His loss was deeply lamented not only by the troops and inhabitants of Jersey, but by the whole nation.

nation. The military abilities which he had displayed on this occasion, justified the highest presumptions of what he might have proved, had he been so fortunate as to survive.

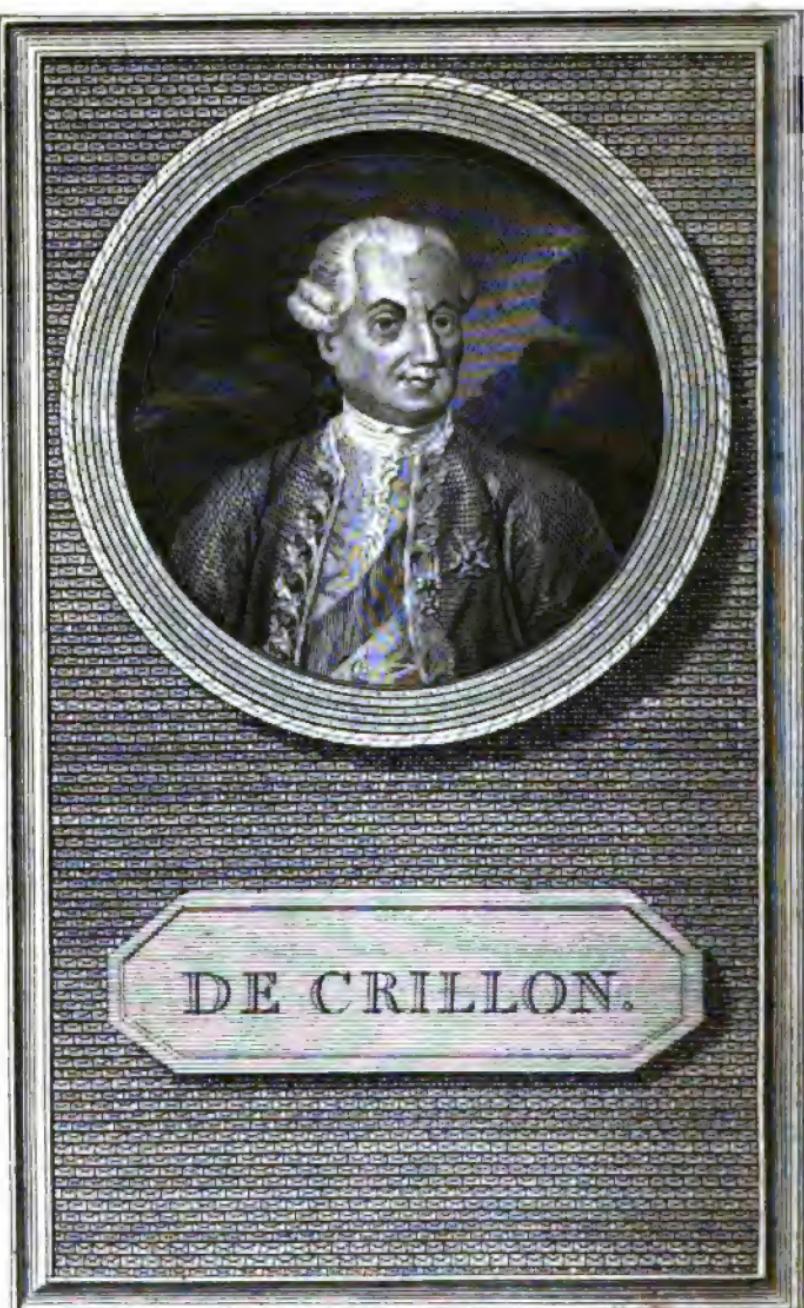
Of the whole force that landed upon the island, amounting to upwards of eight hundred men, not one escaped. They were all either killed or taken. What added greatly to the honour of the British troops, they were chiefly new levies, few of whom had ever been in action.

This second defeat of the French at Jersey, was no small mortification to their ministry, which had long been earnestly desirous of mastering that and the neighbouring island of Guernsey. It grieved them the more, as it proved, that notwithstanding they both lay in the perpetual view of France, they were objects of defiance, much more than of acquisition to that monarchy, and might be considered as an invincible argument of the real superiority Great Britain preserved in the Channel, in spite of the transitory parade of the French and Spanish fleets.

Another island, however, offered itself to their consideration at this time, of more importance in itself, and of a more general utility to the furtherance of their designs. This was Minorca, of which the conquest was not only more practicable, on account of its remoteness from assistance, but would also ingratiate them with Spain, and contribute to remove the discontents with which that kingdom had been filled against France, for having drawn it into a contest that had proved hitherto so expensive and ruinous.

The formation of this enterprize took place early in the year, but was for some time retarded by the length of the preparations it required. They were not completed till towards the close of June, when M. de Guichen sailed from Brest, at the head of





Le Grand del.

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Fielding sc.

of a squadron consisting of the most formidable ships in the French navy: they were eighteen in number, five of which carried one hundred and ten guns. They were joined at Cadiz by thirty Spanish ships of the line, and a large number of transports, carrying a body of ten thousand regular troops.

Great Britain had now so many objects to employ her attention, and they were all of such moment, that a sufficient strength could not be collected in time to prevent the junction and intended movements of the French and Spaniards, at the period and distance at which they were made.— They left Cadiz about the end of July, and landed their forces at Minorca the twentieth of August. Here they were shortly after joined by about six thousand French from Toulon. The combined army of both Crowns was under the command of the Duke of Crillon, a French General of great reputation.

It was the fate of Minorca, at this juncture, to be totally unable to make any effectual resistance against so powerful an enemy. The garrison consisted only of four regiments, two of them British, and two Hanoverians: they were excellent troops, and commanded by two Generals of the highest abilities and bravery, General Murray, and Sir William Draper, both of whom had in happier times remarkably distinguished themselves, the first in North America, the second in the East Indies.— But the soldiers were sickly, and from that reason, as well as the smallness of their number, inadequate to the defence that would be necessary against such a multitude of assailants. From these causes, much more than from the vigour and efforts of the besiegers, it was soon foreseen, that the preservation of Minorca would prove a very difficult, if not an impracticable undertaking: especially when the ob-

obstructions in the way of all succour were taken into consideration.

While the troops of France and Spain were laying siege to Minorca, by the taking of which they proposed to give a final blow to the British power in the Mediterranean, it was determined, in order to display the strength of the House of Bourbon, that their fleets should at the very same time attack those of Great Britain on her own coast. To this purpose, the combined squadrons having been reinforced on their way, entered the channel about the middle of August, to the number of more than seventy sail, about fifty of which were of the line.

Their intent was to intercept the great commercial fleets expected home at this season of the year, and to prevent the sailing of those that were bound to the British settlements abroad. As their multitude enabled them to stretch across the entrance of the Channel, it was resolved in England, notwithstanding their vast superiority, that the naval force then in readiness, consisting of thirty ships of the line, should proceed immediately to sea, and encounter all dangers for the protection of the home-bound fleets.

Admiral Darby, who commanded the British fleet, prepared accordingly for the execution of his orders; and the utmost alacrity and determination to second him, was manifested by his officers and men: but he was detained by contrary winds in Torbay till the middle of September; during which time the enemy remained in possession of the sea adjacent to the West of England, and the South of Ireland, and occasioned no little alarm for the security of the trade returning from Jamaica and the Leeward islands.

The wind still confining the British fleet in Torbay, the French and Spanish Admirals, on information of its inferiority, debated about the propriety

ety of attacking it in that position. Don Vincent Doz, one of the Spanish commanders, insisted with great strenuousness on the disgrace that would attend the neglect of such an opportunity of attacking the English, with so superior a strength as that which could now be brought to act against them.— He offered to be foremost in the attempt.

The proposal of this spirited officer was highly applauded by the chief commander of the French, M. de Guichen. He looked upon the present occasion as the most auspicious that could be found. The principal part of the British navy was now blocked up in a bay, from whence there was no outlet, and where, if defeated, every ship must be taken or destroyed. It was highly probable, considering the vast superiority of the combined fleets, that of Great Britain would be worsted. Such an event would at once terminate the war, to the utmost honour and advantage of the House of Bourbon and its allies. But were they, on the contrary, to decline an engagement, all Europe would brand them with timidity, and interpret their conduct as a tacit acknowledgment of the superior skill and courage of the English.

These arguments were strongly opposed, on the other hand, by M. de Beausset, the second in command to M. de Guichen. He contended that the situation of the British fleet would enable it to fight them at their great disadvantage: they could not attack it in a body, but must form their line a-head, and fall down singly upon the enemy.— This would expose every ship to the collected fire of the whole British fleet, lying fast at anchor, and drawn up in such a manner, as to point all its guns at any object within its reach. He touched also on the bad condition of the combined fleets, the weak state of most of the ships, the Spanish especially,

cially, the number of sick, and several other disadvantages.

The reasons he laid before the French and Spanish commanding officers appeared so well-founded, that it was determined to abandon the design of attacking the British fleet in Torbay, and to turn their attention to the easier task of way-laying that which was coming from the West Indies. As it consisted of merchantmen, the taking of it would be attended with facility, and the loss to England would prove immense.

With these intentions, the combined fleets bore away from the Channel, and stationed themselves in the track through which the West India trade was expected; but the weather became shortly so tempestuous, that they were obliged to relinquish this design, and make the best of their way to their respective ports.

In this manner ended their summer cruize in the British seas this year, as it had done the preceding. Notwithstanding the motives they alledged for this retreat, the majority of people in Europe attributed it to their averseness to risk a decisive engagement with the British fleet. The opinion became general, that either their ships were defectively constructed, or ill found in proper requisites, if not both; and that they were, at the same time, manned with people in whom their commanders durst not place much confidence.

In the mean time, the British mercantile fleets arrived safe from every quarter, to the great mortification of both France and Spain. As their finances began to totter more than ever, they had exerted themselves to cut off those resources for the prosecution of the war arising through the prodigious importations of wealth from the transmarine possessions of Great Britain. It was not, therefore, without deep-felt concern, the French ministry beheld its

its efforts to this essential purpose so completely, and so reiteratedly frustrated by an enemy, whose humiliation they were conscious would never be accomplished by any other means.

In order to balance the failure of this design, it was resolved to give the fullest support to those that were prosecuting elsewhere. Large reinforcements of troops, and great quantities of provisions, naval and military stores, were with all diligence prepared for the various parts of the world where the war was waging. The convoy was so numerous, and of such value and importance, that M. de Guichen was commissioned to accompany it till out of danger of being intercepted, with twenty of the largest ships of the line that could be provided.— Five of them mounted one hundred and ten guns.

These preparations did not however escape the vigilance of the British ministry. A strong squadron was dispatched under Admiral Kempenfelt, to cut off this convoy, of which the arrival at the different places of its destination, would have proved highly injurious to the British interest in those parts. He fell in with it on the twelfth of December, eighty-one. Happily for him, the transports had been parted from the men of war by a violent storm. This enabled him to capture above twenty of them: the want of frigates prevented the taking of many more.

Most of the remaining part of the convoy was in consequence dispersed, and obliged to put back.— But Admiral Kempenfelt, on reconnoitring the force of the enemy, found it so superior to his own, that it would have been the height of imprudence to have ventured an engagement. As he had but twelve ships of the line, he declined the contest, and withdrew into port.

The value of the prizes he had taken was very considerable: they were laden with all kind of ar-

ties requisite for land and sea-service, and with all manner of provisions and necessaries. Near two thousand soldiers and sailors were made prisoners.

But notwithstanding the greatness of the disappointment to France by the loss of so material a proportion of this convoy, the facility with which, as it was asserted, the whole might have been captured, and the heavy blow that would thereby have been given to the enemy, revived the clamours that had been raised on occasion of the fight between Admiral Parker and the Dutch. The same neglect, it was complained, had again prevented the completest success from being obtained. Had a sufficient strength been employed, a victory of the most decisive consequence might have been gained; and instead of part of the convoy, the whole would probably have been taken, together with the fleet by which it was accompanied.

C H A P. LXI.

Military Operations in Carolina, under Lord Rawdon.

1781.

DURING these transactions in the various parts of the world that were become the scenes of this extensive war, it was drawing to a crisis in that country where it first broke out, and had hitherto been carried on with so much obstinacy, and yet with so little tendency to a decision:

The obligation under which Lord Cornwallis found himself to retire to Wilmington, after the victory he had obtained at Guildford over General Greene, was an alarming evidence of the insurmountable difficulties of his situation. It emboldened the American General to direct his operations to those parts of South Carolina of which the British troops had taken possession; not doubting but he should be able, by harassing them, and cutting off their supplies and communication with their principal posts, to compel them to abandon those they occupied in the upper countries, and to withdraw for safety to their garrisons on the sea-coast.

Lord Cornwallis, on setting out in quest of the Americans, previous to the action at Guildford, had left Lord Rawdon at the head of the British forces in the interior part of South Carolina. On the retreat of the British army to Wilmington, General Greene being reinforced, and having refreshed his troops, and collected the people that had been dispersed in that engagement, resolved to march towards Camden, where Lord Rawdon was

then posted. Another body of Americans advanced from another quarter, to make a diversion, and induce him to divide his force.

But it was too small to suffer a division. He thought it most prudent to collect into one body the whole of it, and to make a stand on the spot he occupied against General Greene, whatever his strength might be. His situation was, however, extremely precarious. His provisions were so much reduced, that he was compelled to decline the assistance of a body of Loyalists, that offered their services on this occasion, from absolute inability to maintain them.

On the arrival of General Greene, he was further obliged to contract his posts, and to keep on the defensive. The detachments he had recalled could not join him, a strong body of Americans having taken possession of the passes that led to Camden, and a powerful addition being daily expected to the American army.

In this dangerous situation, Lord Rawdon took the resolution to attack the American General, before his reinforcements were arrived. The latter, confiding in his superiority, had already taken the like determination, and had detached a part of his force to escort a train of artillery to his camp.

Lord Rawdon being apprized of this movement, seized that opportunity to assail him. His whole strength amounted to no more than a thousand men. The Americans were encamped at two miles distance, on the brow of a rocky steep, known by the name of Hobkirk Hill: they were guarded on the left by a deep swamp: it was on this side the attack was intended, as it was imagined they would be less on their guard, from the difficulty of approaching them.

At ten in the morning of the twenty-fifth of April, the British troops marched to the enemy round

round this swamp undiscovered, and entered a wood bordering upon the enemy's left wing. From hence they rushed upon it with so much suddenness and impetuosity, that it was instantly thrown into disorder, and driven to the main body. But the great superiority of number enabled the Americans to rally, and to make a very resolute stand: their artillery arriving at this moment, did also great execution, and the fight continued doubtful during some time.

The front of the Americans proving very inconvenient from its extent, Lord Rawdon, in order to prevent them from surrounding him, was obliged to bring all his troops into one line. Notwithstanding its thinness, they charged the enemy with such fury, that they were at length broken and put to flight. They were not pursued, however, farther than three miles, as Lord Rawdon had but a small body of horse, and his infantry was too much fatigued to continue the pursuit with safety against such very superior numbers.

The Americans withdrew beyond a creek twelve miles distant from the field of battle. Here they posted themselves on a strong ground, in apprehension of a second attack. Their loss was very considerable, when the small number that engaged them is considered. It amounted, in killed and taken, to no less than six hundred; a proportion that exceeded half the victorious army.

The loss on the side of the British troops was about two hundred and fifty slain and wounded: but the impossibility of supplying the place of those that fell, or were disabled, rendered it very heavy. Lord Rawdon had been obliged, in order to encounter the enemy, to arm the very drummers, and all the attendants on the army. He had now hardly eight hundred men left, while the enemy was hourly receiving additional strength.

This victory, though so complete in itself, was of no real service to the British cause. Like that of Guildford, it proved the courage and abilities of the victors, but produced no benefits to them. It seemed, on the contrary, to have accelerated the design that had been some time in agitation in those parts of Carolina that were awed into submission by the British arms: they all at once shook off their obedience, and openly declared against Britain.

Lord Rawdon now saw himself invested on every side. General Greene, with an increasing force, was posted in his front, and strong parties of the enemy lay in his rear. In these circumstances, he judged it more advisable to wait the relief that was promised him, than to expose his small army, if it could deserve such a name, to the hazard of being put between two fires, by quitting the post he occupied.

The assistance he expected consisted of little more than five hundred men, headed by Colonel Watson. This officer, in order to join Lord Rawdon, was obliged to undertake a long and laborious march through a country full of rivers and swamps, which he found the greatest difficulty to cross. After coasting the great river Santee almost to its mouth, he passed it, and resumed his march towards its confluence with the Congaree, where he crossed it once more, before he could effect his junction with Lord Rawdon. The hardships and obstructions surmounted in this march did singular honour to Colonel Watson.

The arrival of this reinforcement enabled Lord Rawdon to undertake the retreat that was now become necessary from Camden, where he was posted in the midst of enemies, without the least expectation of receiving any further succours. Before he proceeded on this design, he resolved, however, to employ the strength he now possessed in a fresh

fresh attempt upon General Greene. But this wary officer, on receiving notice of Colonel Watson's arrival, withdrew from his post, well conjecturing that it would be attacked ; and took another of so much strength, that it was deemed, upon inspection, too difficult to be attempted.

On the ninth of May, eighty-one, the British troops left Camden, bringing off with them their provisions, and the stores of most value, and destroying the residue. They proceeded leisurely on their march, in order to give time to such of their adherents as chose to accompany them, to carry off their effects and moveable property. The enemy endeavoured to harass them, but were quickly repulsed.

The intention of Lord Rawdon was, while making this retreat, to relieve such posts as were attacked by the enemy. The principal of them was called Motte's House, which was closely besieged by the Americans, and vigorously defended by Captain Macpherson. Its situation rendered it of much importance ; but he had the mortification to find that it had fallen into the hands of the enemy, with several others in the neighbourhood.

The troops under Lord Rawdon crossed the Santee at Nelson's Ferry, on the thirteenth of May. In this position he covered the country adjacent to Charlestown, and could wait in safety for reinforcements. Here he was joined by a considerable detachment, which induced him to make a movement forward into the upper country, where the enemy was now expected to renew his operations ; but he was soon obliged to suspend his design for the present, and to retire nearer to Charlestown, upon receiving intelligence that General Greene was coming down upon him in great force.

The defection throughout this province was now become so general, that little or no confidence could

be placed any where. The capital was full of disaffected, who seemed evidently to wait with impatience for an opportunity of throwing off the mask, and openly joining with the enemy.

While the British affairs were in this critical posture, General Greene resolved to attack the post at Ninety-six. Its distance, and the difficulty of relieving it were such, that the Americans entertained no doubt of mastering it, was no other method used but to cut off its supplies,

Lord Rawdon concurring in the same idea, and convinced of the present impracticability of succouring that place, sent word to the commanding officer to abandon it, and to retire to Augusta, which was the nearest post he could with safety remove to, while the enemy occupied all the interjacent country between Ninety-six and the British army.

But the Americans guarded all the roads and passes with so much vigilance; and the inhabitants were so inveterate in their disaffection, that no messages could reach that garrison. It was however under the command of a very brave and able officer, Colonel Cruger; and the defence was so resolute, that the enemy soon began to apprehend that want of provisions alone would compel it to surrender.

In the mean time a body of troops arrived at Charlestown from Ireland, consisting of three complete regiments. The dangerous situation of the province was a sufficient motive with Lord Cornwallis, to whose orders they were assigned, to put them under the command of Lord Rawdon.

He now set forward from Charlestown, at the head of about three thousand men, intending to direct his motions in such wise, as to force the American General to an engagement. His march, on this account, was circuitous, in order to prevent the enemy's retreat, and at the same time to oppose any reinforcements that might be on their way from

from North Carolina and Virginia, the two provinces on the assistance of which the American General principally relied.

Upon information of Lord Rawdon's approach, General Greene took immediately the determination to hazard an assault upon the fort at Ninety-six. No other means were left to carry it, as the daily expectation of the British army's arrival, afforded no more time for the continuation of a regular siege.

The assault was made accordingly on the nineteenth of June, before the break of day. It was conducted with great intrepidity on the part of the Americans; but they met with so undaunted a resistance, that after a long and severe conflict, they were entirely repulsed, with a considerable loss.— Some of their best officers and soldiers fell in this attempt.

Lord Rawdon arriving the next day, found the American army had left its encampment, and retired to a strong ground beyond Bush River, at sixteen miles distance. The great fatigue undergone by the British troops in the long and expeditious march they had taken to come up with the enemy, did not prevent them from setting out in pursuit of him that very evening. For the greater celerity, they threw off every incumbrance: but notwithstanding their speed, the Americans had previously gained so much way, that it was impossible to overtake them, so rapid and continual was their flight.

Notwithstanding the retreat of the enemy, the hostile disposition of the country in the neighbourhood of Ninety-six, rendered it necessary to relinquish that post. The few Loyalists in those parts were taken under the protection of the army, as at Camden, and removed with it to the country more adjacent to Charlestown, where they were promised lands and settlements in the districts vacated

cated by the enemy, equivalent in value to those they were now obliged to abandon.

While these arrangements were taking place, Lord Rawdon selected about one thousand of his best troops, with which he determined to go immediately in quest of the flying enemy. Another body of troops was directed to meet him at an appointed time and place; but while it was on its march for this purpose, the alarm that was spread of the speedy arrival of a French squadron, with a number of troops, raised so much apprehension at Charlestown, that it was recalled for the protection of this capital.

Lord Rawdon, who had been informed of the march of this detachment to his assistance by the officer who commanded it, was advancing with the utmost speed to the place of appointment. Advice was sent him of its recall, but the letter that was addressed to him to this purport, was intercepted by General Greene; who being apprized at the same time of the small force with which he had moved from Ninety-six, resolved to way-lay and surround him, before he could be warned of his danger.

Happily for Lord Rawdon, the recall of the detachment was countermanded; and his motions were so expeditious, that he reached the spot where he expected to meet it two days before it was to arrive. This circumstance enabled him to discover that the enemy was approaching in great force. Part of his cavalry, however, venturing out too far, in expectation of meeting the promised succour, were circumvented by a large body of American horse and foot, and made prisoners.

This was the heavier a loss to Lord Rawdon, as it consisted of the major part of his cavalry, upon which he chiefly depended for the procuring of information

formation in a country, where, from the malevolent disposition of the people, he could trust to nothing but ocular evidence. He now found himself totally disappointed in the object of his expedition. But as it was indispensably requisite to join the troops that were coming to his assistance, in order to prevent them from being overpowered by the enemy, he proceeded with all diligence towards Orangeburgh, where he conjectured they were now arrived.

But in his march to this place he had various impediments to conquer.—Colonel Lee, an American officer of great activity, lay on the opposite banks of Congaree Creek, with a strong corps of cavalry and marksmen. The fords were difficult, and purposely embarrassed with fallen trees, and the places of landing on the other side were steep and rocky. The enemy had broken down the bridge, and kept a guard wherever there was a possibility of crossing.

The only method left to effect one was by surprise. To this intent, in the middle of the day, while the intensity of the heat seemed to suspend all military operations, the British troops suddenly advanced to the river. A chosen party waded over with great quickness, and attacked the enemy with so much courage and impetuosity, that they were totally dispersed, and a passage cleared for those that followed.

Arriving at Orangeburgh, Lord Rawdon was joined, according to his expectation, by a complete regiment, under the command of Colonel Stuart. General Greene, on the other hand, hoping to overtake him before this junction was effected, had used the utmost speed in following him over the Congaree Creek, and was now within a few miles, at the head of a very considerable force, com-

composed of strong reinforcements of American regulars, and a large body of horse.

But having examined the situation and countenance of the British troops, he soon altered the intention he had formed of attacking them; and, notwithstanding his superiority, did not think it advisable to risk an engagement with so well disciplined a force as he now saw collected to face him: he decamped in the night of the tenth of July, and repassed the Congaree with so much precipitation, that he was quite out of reach when Lord Rawdon was made acquainted with the route he had taken.

The excessive heat of the subsequent weather, put an end to the campaign in Carolina for the present. Satisfied with having effected a retreat, General Greene, after taking a secure position on the high-lands east of the river Santee, disposed the remainder of his forces in such a manner, as to form a chain of communication between them, to the intent of checking any attempt on the part of the British troops. These, notwithstanding their successes in the field, were circumscribed within much narrower limits than at the commencement of the campaign. Augusta, in Georgia, had been retaken, and most of that province recovered by the Americans: they were also masters of the upper Carolinas, while the former were confined to the districts bordering on the sea.

Such was the issue of the victories and surprising exertions made by the British commanders, and their officers and people, during the severe course of service they underwent this memorable year in the Southern Colonies. The hardships they endured were such as experience only could have proved that human nature was capable of supporting. The extremes of fatigue, hunger, and thirst,

thirst, were through continual repetitions become habitual to them, and they were in a manner familiarised with all the wants and miseries incident to hostilities of the most destructive and ruinous nature. In many of their expeditions, their very subsistence was casual, and chiefly depended upon the accidental discovery of scanty supplies of food. It was only by dint of searching, they were able to find them among a people, who, from their ignorance, industriously sought to deprive them of every means of sustenance, and carefully concealed all the provisions they had to spare, for the use of their adversaries.

But it was precisely from the very greatness of these exertions, that thinking people drew the most alarming presages with regard to the cause for which they were displayed. Their inutility, or rather their fatal consequences, became daily more visible, in the loss of those numbers of brave men who fell in the field, or became the victims of an inauspicious climate, where as many perished through its baneful influence, as by the chances of war.

It was equally a matter of astonishment and mortification to ministry, that such spirit and sufferings should produce no effect in forwarding the main object in contemplation. The enemy still continued unsubdued and undismayed. His perseverance was equal to every trial, and his resolution seemed to increase in proportion to the endeavours that were made to overcome it. Losses and defeats, instead of despondency and dread, excited his resentment and obstinacy: every advantage obtained over him demanded fresh successes to support and confirm it, and occasioned, on his part, additional efforts to frustrate it.

A contest of such a description could not fail being attended with uncommon and unforeseen difficulties.

difficulties. The character of the people, and the nature of the country, seemed equally stubborn and unconquerable, and calculated to contribute reciprocally to their joint defence. Against such an enemy, the valour and resources that would elsewhere have proved irresistible, were necessarily precarious; as their effects here depended upon causes of a peculiar and local cast, and operating in a manner, which, as it was unusual and new, could hardly at so vast a distance, have been either foreseen or prevented.

C H A P. LXII.

Campaign of Lord Cornwallis in Virginia.—Engagement between the British and French fleets off that Coast.—Capitulation at York Town.

1781.

DURING the operations of the forces under Lord Rawdon in Carolina, Lord Cornwallis had for a time been compelled to remain at Wilmington, through the want of due requisites to put in motion the troops under his command. They were destitute of almost every necessary ; yet, notwithstanding their wretched condition, and the remembrance of what they had lately suffered, they chearfully acquiesced in the resolution he took of setting out for Virginia ; though they well knew the impediments in their way, the length of the march, and the numberless hardships with which they must contend.

After having maturely reflected on the situation of affairs, Lord Cornwallis found this determination the most advisable one he could now resolve upon. His force] was at this time so reduced, that he had not fifteen hundred men complete. He could not, with such a handful, venture back across the Carolinas to the assistance of Lord Rawdon, between whom and him the Americans were posted in great force, and occupied all the passes and fords of the many rivers throughout that vast tract of country. The very length of the journey, and the perpetual conflicts he must go through, would at the same time so harass and consume the small force he had, that it would be wasted to nothing, before he could join Lord Rawdon ; were this practicable in the face of so superior an enemy, and so many obstructions.

For these reasons, he formed the resolution of penetrating through North Carolina, and the South of Virginia, to the British army that was at this time employed in the reduction of that province, under the Generals Philips and Arnold, whose successes in those parts had been very great, and seemed to open a prospect of still greater.

As they were accompanied by a multitude of vessels, they were enabled to navigate through a vast extent of inland country, by means of the great rivers with which that province is every where intersected. At Pittsburgh, on the river Appomatox, they destroyed a prodigious quantity of tobacco, that had been collected at that town for exportation: it amounted to no less than four thousand hogsheads. The damage was immense, not only to the province, but to the whole confederacy, from the deficiency that would be occasioned to the public revenue, through the loss of so considerable a remittance.

But this was only a part of the vast losses the Americans sustained in this quarter. The destruction of shipping, and naval stores of every denomination, of dock-yards and other constructions of that kind, of public building, stores and warehouses, and of provisions of every sort, was at that time irreparable; and proved a most serious and essential detriment to the whole continent.

At a place called Osborn, General Arnold came up with some ships of force in the service of Congress. After some resistance, they were either burnt or taken, with several others richly laden: From this place the troops proceeded to Manchester, a small town in the neighbourhood, where they set some considerable magazines on fire: they did the same at Warwick, a flourishing settlement, containing a number of warehouses, with variety of merchandize, all which were seized or consumed.

In

present, to examine how far the success of those measures corresponded with the motives from which they had been approved. But how different was the prospect from that which had been promised ! Instead of that peaceable picture which ministry had drawn in such flattering colours, they beheld all America in flames ; and it would require the skill of the ablest statesman to extinguish it.

To require them to give their sanction to the plans in agitation among ministers, was an attempt to impose upon their common sense and experience. It was inviting them to add fuel to a fire that was consuming one of the noblest monuments of British genius and industry.

America was now, it clearly appeared, to be devoted to ministerial vengeance, for having fully proved the incompetency of the schemes that were now in prosecution. With what presumption had its immediate fall been foretold, beneath the terrors awaiting the armaments that had been sent forth ? But had any supplicating voice been heard among the Americans ? Were they not, on the contrary, standing in a firm and compact array, prepared to meet our utmost wrath, and full of confidence in the justice of their cause.

It were imprudence in the extreme, with such a sight before them, to go forward without inquiring how far they were warranted in taking so serious a step. Speed was only advisable in the execution of designs maturely weighed ; but no deliberation had preceded those of which ministry demanded their approbation.

Those designs had hitherto been attended with a kind of fatality. Whatever had been done in consequence of them, had invariably been productive of mischief. Was it consistent with prudence to persist in a system not one part of which had answered expectation ?

The answer to these objections was, that the behaviour of America was so disrespectful, and even so threatening, that it would argue a total want of spirit to let it pass without notice. It was nugatory to say that the Americans were persuaded of the equity of their cause. This was an argument that might as justly be pleaded in justification of Great Britain. But who was, in such a contest, to decide of its rectitude or impropriety? If Britain ought not, had America a better title? The contest was now chiefly from that quarter. It began about the right of Great Britain to impose taxes upon America. In compliance with the wishes of America, Great Britain virtually relinquished this right, by repealing every money act saving one. That one was the least material of any; its produce was a mere trifle: it was excepted for no other reason than to preserve the honour of the nation: the Americans knew it; but nothing would satisfy the Americans; their pride and obstinacy disdained to feel for the honour of Britain: an unlimited submission to their demands, was the sole condition upon which they declared themselves willing to be reconciled.

In private quarrels, individuals that meant reconciliation, met each other half way: the party that refused was always considered as the most blameable. Now Britain had gone more than half this way; she had gone almost the whole; but America had not moved a single step from the ground upon which she stood at first: she seemed imperiously to wait for a total unreserved acquiescence in her desires on the part of Britain.

This was a faithful portraiture of the respective position of the two contestants. Would any man that wished well to the reputation of Britain, require that she should humbly submit to the dictates of America? All had been done that could be expected by the friends of America: all had been sacrificed,

erified, the honour of Britain excepted : Heaven forbid that also should be given up to the haughtiness of the Americans. They alone had protracted the contest, by refusing all condescendance, while Britain made so many concessions. Such a dissimilitude of behaviour made it necessary for Britain to alter both her stile and conduct. She no longer exacted taxes from America ; she demanded homage and respect ; she felt herself insulted, and expected a reparation of her honour : she was not only the parent, but the protecting state ; this gave her a superiority which incontestably empowered her to look for deference and condescension in her dependants.

The very nature of the dispute was totally changed. America having refused the most slender acknowledgment of the sovereignty of Britain, that could in the present circumstances have been required, was guilty of a wilful and daring affront, which merited a conspicuous chastisement. Were Britain to refrain from inflicting it, her spirit and her power would equally be questioned ; and if she delayed it, the evil would accumulate by an increase of insolence on the part of the Colonies, and of contempt on that of the European nations, which had already testified their surprise at the patience and inaction of the British ministers, under such repeated provocations.

Such was the stile of the debates upon this address : they were equally spirited in both Houses ; but it was carried in the House of Commons by two hundred and sixty-four, against seventy-three ; and in the House of Lords by sixty-three to thirteen.

Such majorities decided at once the fate of all opposition to ministry ; and the Americans had now full intimation given them, that they would meet with no more favour from the present Parliament than from the last.

But the firmness and perseverance of this opposition was not in the least diminished by the prospect of the numbers it would have to encounter. Small as it was in the Upper House, it produced a protest which concluded with these remarkable words : — “ Whatever may the mischievous designs, or the inconsiderate temerity which leads others to this desperate course, we wish to be known as persons who have ever disapproved of measures so pernicious in their past effects, and their future tendency ; and who are not in haste, without inquiry or information, to commit ourselves in declarations which may precipitate our country into all the calamities of a civil war.”

The opposition in Parliament was in the mean time strongly seconded by the merchants of London and Bristol trading to America. As they were fully apprised of the consequences that must necessarily ensue from a perseverance in the hostile measures resolved upon with North America, and deeply interested in such an event, they exerted their whole influence to avert it. They prepared a representation of the distresses they would unavoidably suffer from such measures, and pointed out circumstantially the various detriments that would arise from them to the public, and how dearly the prosecution of them must be paid for.

This opposition was attended with another of no less weight and consequence. Mr. Pitt, now Lord Chatham, had for several years lived a retired life, remote from the busy scenes in which he had long acted so conspicuous a part. But his apprehensions of the danger impending on the state, now brought him again from his retreat. Though from several causes his popularity was diminished, and his power much lessened, yet the native dignity of his superior genius, and the remembrance of the illustrious part he had acted in the service of his country, could not

not fail to procure him attention and influence to which ever side he might seem to incline.

He appeared in the House of Lords on the first 20th Jan. day of their meeting after the Christ-
mas recess. He began his speech by a total dissent from the plan pursued in America by the ministry, and moved for an address to the King, immediately to recall the troops from Boston, as a necessary step to all reconciliation. "An hour now lost," said he, "in allaying the ferment in America, might produce years of calamity, as the situation of the troops rendered them and the Americans continually liable to events which would cut off the possibility of a reconciliation. By withdrawing them, a proof of confidence and good will would be given on our side, that would remove jealousy and suspicion on the other. This was a preliminary step of an indispensable nature, and which must be taken previous to all others. It would be the setting of our foot on the threshold of peace."

He animadverted in the severest terms upon the conduct of ministry. He accused them of having deceived the nation, by misrepresenting the situation of the Colonies, and by impressing people with an idea, that the disputes and disturbances among them were the affair of Boston only, in which the rest were unconcerned, and which a single regiment would suffice to quell. He pointedly reprobated the whole system of acts and regulations lately passed respecting them. He contended not, he said, for indulgence, but justice to America. If we consulted our interest or our dignity, the first advances to peace and concord should come from us; as concession always comes with a better grace, and more salutary effects, from a superior. He warned them to retract in time, lest unfortunate accidents should compel them to submit to the disgraceful necessity

of yielding through force, what they might have had the credit of granting through kindness.

He concluded a long and animated speech upon this important occasion, in the following bold and striking manner :—“ If the ministers,” said he, “ thus persevere in misadvising and misleading the King, I will not say that they can alienate the affections of his subjects from his crown; but I will affirm they will make the crown not worth his wearing :—I will not say that the King is betrayed, but I will pronounce that the kingdom is undone.”

But the efforts of Lord Chatham in favour of the Americans, availed them nothing. Coercion was now decisively resolved upon by the majority, and no other plan was allowed to be admissible. They renewed all the arguments tending to criminate America, and to justify the conduct of ministry. The time was now arrived, said they, for a final resolution not only to be taken, but enforced. Parliament is determined to be obeyed; America refuses obedience; what then but force can decide? To postpone coercion after so many threats, would be derogating from the national dignity. Delays in so urgent a business would defeat it without remedy, as the Americans were daily increasing their preparations and strength to encounter it. Years had elapsed since it had been the duty of Great Britain to employ her superiority of means in crushing this rebellious spirit: she had suffered it already to go too far. But if relying on the groundless hope that America might be reclaimed by other measures, she neglected those of compulsion, she would only render it a task of more difficulty to employ them successfully in future, as she would certainly find to her cost, that she must employ them at last, however unwilling, if she meant to retain any power over the Colonies.

After

After a violent contest, supported chiefly by a repetition of what had so frequently been urged, the motion was rejected by a majority of sixty-eight to eighteen.

In the mean time, the merchants and manufacturers throughout the kingdom, in imitation of those of London and Bristol, laid a variety of petitions before Parliament against the hostile projects of the ministry respecting America.

The treatment of these petitions was remarkable: they were highly displeasing to the people in power, as tending directly to defeat all the purposes they had so much at heart; but as they could not be rejected with a high hand, without adding considerably to the multitude who opposed the ministry, a committee was appointed to take them into consideration, which was not to take place till after a previous committee on the affairs of America.

The reason assigned for separating these two objects, was, that the consideration of commercial, ought not to interfere with political matters; each of these being sufficiently perplexing, without other embarrassment. While the attention of the House was taken up with the one, it ought not therefore to be distracted by the other: both together would puzzle and perplex; but asunder, would be discussed with much more ease and perspicuity.

But opposition would not admit of such a reasoning. To disunite politics from commerce, in treating of the business of America, were dividing, in a manner, the body from the soul. To what purpose should we concern ourselves about America, unless it were for the sake of commerce? But were it otherwise, there was no class of men whose correspondence assisted more in the illustration of political knowledge than that of merchants; they corresponded upon all subjects necessary for each others

information; among these the political occurrences of the times constituted a principal part; as according to these, they regulated their mercantile proceedings. To exclude the intelligence that must arise from blending commerce with politics, would therefore be extremely unwise, especially in a case where they were so intimately linked as in all that related to the British Colonies.

To defer the hearing of these petitions till the other committee had sat, was in effect to reject them. They were intended as reasons to influence that very committee against the proposals of ministry. The truth was, they were dreaded as the most formidable objections to these proposals, and were not, for that reason, to be permitted to enter the lists, till the enemy they were to combat, had moved off the field triumphantly, under pretence that no antagonist appeared to oppose them.

But the House of Commons was equally decisive for ministerial measures with the House of Lords. The question was carried in their favour by one hundred and ninety-seven, against eighty-one.

In consequence of this decision, the petitions that had been presented from London, Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, Norwich, Birmingham, Glasgow, and other commercial towns, were successively consigned to what was then humorously entitled the Committee of Oblivion.

But the merchants of London were determined not to give up a contest of so weighty a kind, without testifying to the world how much they thought the proceedings of administration were contrary to sound policy. They drew up a kind of protest, in which they asserted, that the connection between Great Britain and America was principally of a commercial nature, as the benefits derived from it to each were chiefly such. During a century, and more, the wisdom of Parliament had been perpetually

ally employed in increasing and encouraging the trade carried on between them, as an object of the last importance. That the manifold regulations adopted for the mutual prosperity of the Colonies and the mother country, formed the great political chain that united them to each other. Questions of commerce and policy, wherein both are concerned, ought therefore never to be divided, but examined jointly, as composing a whole, of which the parts can never be well perceived, unless they are placed in one point of view.

This remonstrance was presented on the day appointed for the previous committee to take place.— It was warmly seconded by the opposition, who insisted on the indignity offered to so respectable a body as the merchants of London, in referring the petition to a mock examination. A direct refusal would have been less mortifying.

As to the pretence so strongly urged, that a discussion of commercial matters would create a delay in the prosecution of measures of more consequence, it was unjust and groundless. No measures could equitably be formed without such a discussion; and the time required for it would not be of sufficient length to invalidate any measures that might follow in consequence of so proper and necessary a discussion.

Such a proceeding, it was further alledged, was unparliamentary: it pre-supposed a knowledge and conviction in ministers that the question would be carried according to their wishes; this indeed was not surprizing; but what was truly intolerable, it took away the very forms that should be observed in transactions of this kind, and prevented those who had a clear right to it, from stating their objections to the measures that passed against their suffrages.

But the fact was, the ultimate decision of ministers was already taken; they were tired of hearing

so many speeches, of which they knew beforehand the inefficacy. War was now the word; and notwithstanding no weightier reason could be given for not attending to what the merchants had to say than this very determination, yet that was the very motive that impelled ministers to refuse them a hearing, lest these should make it appear how unwise it was to precipitate the nation into such a measure.

And yet in case of a war, whom were they bound to consult with more attention and deference than the mercantile classes, upon whom principally depends the arrangement of finances, and those pecuniary resources without which war cannot be waged. In whatever light therefore the point in question was considered, every motive concurred to induce the ministry to pay the most serious regard to the representations laid before them by so great a number of merchants from all parts of the kingdom.

In answer to the opposition, it was alledged, that faction had the principal hand in framing of the petitions so much recommended. The merchants had hitherto testified the fullest reliance on the discretion of Parliament; why should they seize an occasion of this kind to express their doubts of its willingness to consult their interests, and its ability to do it effectually?

The trade of Great Britain to America was in truth highly beneficial; but this was owing to the dependent situation of our Colonies: were they permitted to encroach on the superiority of Britain, and to break through the regulations that had been framed with so much care and sagacity to secure it, the advantages resulting from their commerce, would gradually diminish, and become undeserving of the solicitude with which England had so invariably attended to the protection and welfare of her American dependencies.

Distant possessions required an equal mixture of lenity and firmness in the manner of governing them.

them. America, it could not be denied, had experienced hitherto, much more of the first than of the last. Presuming on its flourishing condition, and glorying in its strength, it now aimed at an abatement of that superiority on the side of Britain, which had been exercised ever since the foundation of her Colonies, without the least complaint or appearance of dissatisfaction. But should Britain relax of those rights she had so long maintained, and enjoyed without dispute, the merchants themselves would be the first to feel the consequences, and to arraign the imprudent indulgence of those ministers who should, from ill-founded motives of policy, comply with the unreasonable requests of the Colonists.

True it was, that war, and its concomitances, were a terrible object to behold; but they were sometimes necessary, to prevent greater evils.—What evil could beset a trading nation so much to be dreaded, as the loss of its commerce?—Was America to proceed in the course it had begun, a few years would suffice to set her free from all those restraints that render the possession of her valuable to Great Britain.

The chief of these restraints was the navigation act. But though the strict observance of this, and the several injunctions laid upon them, might wear the appearance of severity, yet they contributed to the reciprocal advantage of both parties, by encouraging the native produce of the Colonies, and enabling Britain not only to defend them with her arms, but to grant them immense sums of money in annual bounties upon every article of trade which they could either discover or improve.

It had been repeatedly demonstrated by fact, no less than by argument, that the interest of both Great Britain and America consisted in the preservation

vation of the commercial system so long established between them. By adhering to it, they had both prospered in a wondrous degree; and it might with great truth be added, that the proportion of that prosperity was evidently greater in every essential respect on the side of America, than on that of Great Britain. In proof of this, without entering into any further detail, let the respective condition of the commonalty be viewed in both countries, and let an impartial observer decide which is the most enviable of the two.

The demands of the Americans were consequently ungenerous and ill-timed. They were fully conscious of the greater ease of circumstances attending the generality of individuals among them, and of the oppressive burdens with which they were loaded in Britain. They knew the exigencies of the parent state, and with what difficulty she bore up against the embarrassments that surrounded her. Was this therefore a season to cavil about requests not attended, perhaps, with all the formality which their pride exacted, but certainly founded upon the strictest necessity, and of which nothing could warrant the refusal.

Were that perpetual plea of the Americans sincere, —apprehension for their just rights and immunities, they would ere now have devised some expedient to assist Great Britain in such a method as might prove equally useful to her, and agreeable to their own ideas. But during a contest that had lasted now ten years, they had not made a single proposal. —This showed, beyond the power of contradiction, that it was not the manner of asking their assistance which displeased them, so much as the very matter itself. They were secretly determined to give none; and their whole study was to hide this determination, under the pretence of an illegality in the mode of applying to them for such purposes.

Were

Were concessions to be made until the Americans were entirely satisfied, would their warmest advocate stand up and name the last of their demands? They were indefinite; and, in truth, aimed at a total repeal of whatever might seem obnoxious to their immediate interest. But that and their real interest differed greatly. A deprivation of the commercial and political support they derived from Great Britain, would be the greatest unhappiness that could befall them. But this they must submit to, if they should ever succeed in the pursuit of that delusive phantom of independence of all controul from Britain, which was so erroneously represented as the happiest situation they could attain.

Concessions, in short, were not the true method of reclaiming the Americans. They might appear such to the mercantile classes, from the facility of making them, and the speed with which tranquility would be restored. But how long would this tranquility remain unshaken? No longer than till the merchants of Great Britain had found how much their interest would suffer from the consequences of those concessions. This would quickly be discovered, when, unfettered by regulations, the Colonies received the produce of other countries, and carried their own wherever they thought proper. This was the point they incontestably aimed at, however they might pretend to the contrary. Notwithstanding their boast of the vast business transacted with Great Britain, it was well known to arise from the prodigious credit they were indulged with here, and could not expect elsewhere.

True it was, that some years might elapse before these evils would be discovered; but they would infallibly arrive, and their progress, though silent and unnoticed at first, would nevertheless be steady and progressive, until they became so powerful

ful as not to be remedied. Now therefore was the season to obviate them, before they had taken too deep a root, and while the strength of Britain was adequate to their eradication.

Considerations of less importance had often put arms into the hands of Britain: why should she hesitate in a case like the present, where honour and interest unitedly call upon her for the most speedy and vigorous exertions? The merchants were wont heretofore to second the wishes of the ministry, instead of opposing them: if they were alarmed at the suspension of those profits accruing from commerce, it was an inconvenience to which they had frequently submitted: their enemies would experience as many, if not more; and it were unworthy of the character they had so long sustained, to yield to indignities for the sake of profit.

But the losses in present contemplation were nothing in comparison to those that would follow in future, should Britain, from a spiritless fondness for temporary quiet, give up tamely those advantages that would issue from a resolute maintenance of her just rights. This was a policy hitherto unknown in this country, where, instead of hesitation and backwardness, her councils had always been noted for the ardour and celerity with which they were inspired, whenever the cause of the public was in agitation.

These were the scope and purport of the numberless arguments that filled both the Parliament and the nation. But such was the heat and violence of parties at this juncture, that arguments alone did not suffice to exhale it. All bounds of decency were overleaped in this unfortunate contention. Scurrility and invective were substituted in lieu of reasoning; and animosity superseded all the rules of civility and decorum.

Never did ministry and opposition engage with so much warmth as on the present occasion. The latter, who

who felt how light they were in the scale of power, exerted all their eloquence and abilities in order to render their antagonists odious. They represented them as incapable, neglectful, and inconsistent; and the acts framed under their auspices, as the offspring of false information and ignorance. They were threatened with a severe vengeance, when the day should come, as it must at last, that the nation would open its eyes to the iniquity of their administration.

The last Parliament was described as deeply participating of their guilt; and no language was spared in drawing it in the most defamatory colours. Among a variety of charges, one in particular specified, that it began its political life with a violation of the sacred right of election in the case of Middlesex, that it died in the act of Popery, by establishing the Romish religion in Canada, and had left a rebellion in America, as a legacy to the nation.

The final conclusion of this scene of altercation and inveteracy was, that the motion in favour of the merchants petition was rejected by a division of two hundred and fifty to eighty-nine.

But opposition was not alone in this day of trial. America seconded them strenuously in the persons of her agents, one of whom, on this memorable occasion, was Doctor Franklin, whose genius and abilities had, at the time of the stamp act, been so successfully exerted in the service of his country.

These gentlemen presented a petition, originally addressed by the American Congress to the King, who had referred it to Parliament.

Hereupon a violent debate immediately arose. No petition, it was argued, could be received from the continental Congress. It was no legal body; and to admit of any hearing on their behalf, would be a sort of recognition of their legality. The general

peral Assemblies, and their agents, were the only lawful representatives of the Colonies: none else would be admitted.

The reply was, that no government subsisted in the Colonies. Popular commotions, acts of Parliament, and dissolutions, had severally put an end to it. It was now incumbent on Parliament to co-operate in restoring it. The Congress consisted of persons of great influence in America, who were highly desirous to prevent the continuation of the disorders: they deserved, therefore, to be heard, if not as a public body, at least as individuals of character. Petitions were the acknowledged right of subjects of all denominations; and it would ill become the British Parliament to reject one that came recommended by so many motives to give it at least, a civil, if not a favourable reception.

It behoved Parliament in so dangerous a crisis as the present, to beware of treating petitions or petitioners with superciliousness: they ought, on the contrary, to be encouraged, as possibly the readiest, and, indeed, now the only means of preventing infinite mischiefs. These mischiefs were evidently impending, and would fall heavily and speedily on Britain and America, if not prevented with the utmost diligence.

Parliament ought to rejoice at the humility adopted by Congress, and receive its addresses with the more readiness, as a refusal would cut off all means of communication with so respectable a body; which, though not assembled according to the legal forms, was in fact the most powerful and important assembly at present in North America.

It ought to be duly remembered, that it was chiefly by rejecting petitions, America had been brought to its present condition of turbulence and confusion. This pointed out the necessity of acting

ing otherwise, unless it was resolved to accelerate rebellion. This would infallibly be produced by a refusal to attend to the present petition. It was the duty of Parliament to receive it, as the very intent of their sitting was to hear and redress the grievances of the subject.

After an ineffectual struggle, the American agents had the mortification of seeing the petition rejected by a majority of two hundred and eighteen to fifty-eight.

In the mean time a conciliatory plan was preparing by the Earl of Chatham. Preserving the unshakenness and perseverance of his character, he absolutely determined to exert his whole abilities in opposition to the hostile schemes proposed by ministry.

To this effect, he laid before the House of Commons a bill, the intent of which was to settle the troubles in America, and to assert, at the same time, the supreme legislative authority and superintending power of Great Britain over the Colonies.

He requested the House, in the most earnest and pathetic terms, sincerely to assist in so salutary a work; to lay aside the prejudices of party, and to consider well the importance of the subject before them.

The contents of this famous bill were, a specific acknowledgment of the supremacy of the legislature, and the superintending power of the British Parliament. It declared that no taxes or charges should be levied in America but with the free consent of their Assemblies. It asserted a right in the Crown to keep and station a military force established by law, in any part of its dominions; but declared, that it could not be lawfully employed to enforce implicit and illegal submission. It authorised the holding of

Congress in order to recognize the supreme sovereignty of Great Britain over the Colonies, and to settle, at the same time, an annual revenue upon the Crown, disposable by Parliament, and applicable to the exigencies of the nation. On complying with these conditions, the acts complained of by Congress were to be suspended, with every other measure pointed out as a grievance, and the constitution of their governments to remain as settled by their charters.

But this bill, of which the illustrious framer had conceived so much hopes, met with the fate of every proposal that had been made in favour of America. It was opposed with universal violence, condemned without reserve, and pronounced at once totally inadmissible.

The reasons alledged for this immediate and entire condemnation, was its evident partiality to America, by the various concessions it enacted, and in particular by empowering the Colonies to assemble in Congress; a measure which, of all others, was the most offensive to the dignity of Great Britain, and most injurious to its interests.

The suspension of the acts to which they objected, was, in fact, a repeal. Were, for instance, the Admiralty Courts to be abrogated, what would become of the navigation act? The rebellious schemes of America were no secret: they pretended grievances; but meant, in reality, to put an end to all authority of Great Britain among them. It were the height of infatuation to think of concessions, with so many proofs of their antipathy to Britain. It was the business of every friend to his country, to combat their hostile disposition with undaunted firmness, and by no means to appear pliant and yielding while they assumed, in all their behaviour such an air of enmity and defiance.

These

These assertions, it was urged, were not mere words called up for the purpose of a debate. They were prompted by matters of fact, and were unhappily but too well founded. While they were deliberating within these walls, the inhabitants of America had actually taken the field. They had attacked one of the King's garrisons, mastered it, and seized all the stores and ammunition for their own use, to be employed against Britain. Who could, after this, open his mouth in their defence or favour? They were no longer entitled to either. They had now thrown off the mask, and shown themselves, what they were,—inveterate enemies to Britain.

From these causes it was moved, that the bill introduced as conciliatory, should be thrown out, in the very first instance. In this motion the ministerial party concurred without the least hesitation. The circumstance above-mentioned of seizing a King's fort, contributed not a little to the warmth and hastiness with which the bill was rejected. Such conduct in the Americans was not unjustly looked upon as a commencement of hostilities.

But the spirit of Lord Chatham did not yield to the majority by which his plan was so completely defeated. He supported their attacks with all the fire of his former years, and defended it by a variety of reasonings.

While ministers, said he, represented America as in a state of rebellion, it behoved every man present to exercise his capacity for the quelling of it. No plan had hitherto appeared in that House for so necessary a purpose. To what could this be imputed, but to a negligence absolutely criminal in so arduous a situation of publick affairs? When every exertion should be made to prevent the calamities that were so fast approaching; and that could not be ob-

vised by any other method so effectually, as by a plan of reconciliation. It was to invite ministers to embrace friendly measures, that he had employed himself in framing proposals of that tendency, which he adduced a multitude of reasons to prove, were the only effectual means to settle the peace of America upon a stable and permanent basis.

His opinion was supported by the concurrence of other Lords in the opposition. They contended that it was highly unreasonable to reject with scurrilous discussion, a bill that tended to bring about a specification so much wanted on both sides of the Atlantic. What would the Americans think, when they heard with what impetuosity all propositions of peace and amity with them were attacked by so respectable a body as the Peerage of Great Britain? Would they not instantly, and justly conclude, that all hopes of reconciliation were at an end, and that it only remained for them to prepare for war?

Allowing that the conduct of the Americans was highly blameable, and merited even chastisement, still if it were possible to avoid so harsh an extremity, without degrading the nation, would any prudent man declare himself an enemy to any measure by which so salutary an end could be accomplished? War could only be justified when the object proposed was not otherwise attainable.—If the Colonists could be induced to comply with such terms, as were reconcilable with the dignity of the parent state, as well as with their own views and wishes, would not this prove a most desirable event? Was it not therefore just and laudable to strive with all possible zeal to compass it, in preference to those projects that were founded upon coercion? These were a disgrace to humanity, and a resource which no good politician ever admitted into

into his thoughts, while the smallest hope remained of compromising differences upon any other footing.

It was further asserted, that ministry ought seriously to consider, whether America was the sole enemy that Great Britain would have to encounter, in case of her having recourse to arms for the decision of this unhappy quarrel. Though America was unequal to a trial of strength with Great Britain, were no other enemies to be apprehended? Would our ancient rivals stand still, when so fair an opportunity was offered them of returning the heavy blows we had given them so lately? It was vain to flatter ourselves the Americans would have no associates; the envy which the greatness and prosperity of this country had universally created, would operate on this occasion every where: they would find well-wishers and abettors at our very doors, and would soon meet with their open countenance or secret assistance. No man that professed himself the least conversant in historical knowledge, could deny the validity of these surmises. With such a prospect of sure and certain danger, was it eligible to proceed in the track that led directly to it? Did the situation of Great Britain warrant such a step?—Was she united in her sentiments concerning the justice and propriety of venturing upon a war?—Though a Parliamentary majority might approve it, would the nation at large join heart and hand in such a measure? The ministry ought to know that America had a number of partizans in Britain, who not only condemned the proceedings of the people in power, but even reprobated the principles upon which they were founded, and justified the resistance of the Colonies. People of this mind would always find means of obstructing, more or less, the designs carrying on against America; and might,

though indirectly, prove more effectual supporters of its cause than ministers seemed aware. To dwell more particularly on this circumstance might not be advisable; but it should not be forgotten, that where a nation is so considerably divided in opinion, people should not be fanguine in their decisions, and ought, in common modesty, to allow the possibility of their being in error.

The ministerial party was not silenced by these objections. They were represented as far-fetched, and founded chiefly upon fears and apprehensions. Were men to hearken to these, no active measures could ever be taken. Danger and uncertainty was the lot of all human enterprizes; but were these a sufficient motive to refrain from acting, when called upon by just and valid reasons? Did it become Britain to be passive under affronts at this, more than any other time? Was it especially from her own subjects she ought to receive them without resentment? This was not a maxim ever inculcated in the school of sound policy: we are taught there, that without a proper spirit no state can flourish and command respect. But without adverting to general notions, why should we behave with more timidity towards our Colonies, than any other state that treated us with indignity? We had faced the greatest powers on earth fearlessly and successfully, and at a time when it was thought as much as now, that they would prove an over-match; but the courage and resources of Britain conquered all difficulties, and would conquer them again, if exerted with spirit, prudence, and fidelity: while we can depend upon these, we may safely bid defiance to all our enemies.

Much had been insisted upon the disunion prevailing at home; but was there no disunion in the Colonies? Were they to a man unanimous against Britain?

Britain? The contrary was well known. With cautiousness and management, a large proportion would remain faithful and active in our favour; and it would be our own fault if more did not side with us than with our adversaries. The means were still in our power;—firmness in our measures, and warmth in the cause of our friends and adherents.

The proferring of terms to America was vain and disgraceful. They had repeatedly declared against all others but those which they had dictated from the commencement of the dispute, and still insisted upon at this day. With a people so obstinate, and so wedded to their own ideas, no treaty could be had: we must either comply with their terms implicitly, or force them to accept our own. Of the two alternatives, which became it Britain to adopt, consistently with its honour? But after all the discussions and investigations that had perplexed Parliament in the course of this contest, was it not plain that America was weary of obedience to Great Britain? Was the question therefore any other, than whether Britain shall maintain her sovereignty, or relinquish it? No man, it was presumed, would rise up in that House, and move for a renunciation, on the part of Great Britain, of the dominion over America. If therefore it is to be retained, the sooner we convince the Americans of our ability to do it, the more spirit and consistency will appear in our councils, and the less we shall be suspected of being defective either in means to accomplish such a design, or in fortitude to undertake it.

The issue of this long debate resembled that of the preceding. It concluded in the entire overthrow of the motion made by the Earl of Chat-ham: the votes were sixty-one to thirty-two. So resolute was the majority in giving it an entire re-

jection, that it was not even permitted to remain upon the table ; a severe mortification to a man who had made so splendid a figure, whose abilities had raised the nation to such a pitch of *grandeur*, and whose opinion and judgment had once been considered as the oracle of this country !

The determination to oppose all conciliatory measures was equally remarkable in the House of Commons. A petition was presented to it by the proprietors of estates in the West India islands, representing their alarm at the association of the American Colonies, and at their intended stoppage of all trade with the English islands. Should this be carried into execution, which it certainly would, if Parliament did not repeal the acts they complained of, the situation of the islands would become very calamitous.

The property of Britain in the West India islands amounted to more than thirty millions. A fund of several other millions was employed in this trade : it was of the most extensive nature ; all quarters of the globe were concerned in it ; the returns centered in Britain, and were an immense addition to its intrinsic opulence. The shipping was an object of still greater consideration, by the vast number of seamen which it constantly maintained.

But the West Indies, however wealthy, did not produce the necessaries of life in sufficient abundance for their inhabitants. Large importations were continually wanted, which North America was the only place to supply : were they to be cut off from a communication with that continent, they would shortly be reduced to the utmost distress.

This petition, however, did not alter the disposition of those who supported the ministry. They seemed resolved to treat all petitions as the contrivance of faction. The general ideas of those who approved

approved of coercive measures, was that however inconvenient, they ought not to be retarded by such a consideration. Hostilities were necessarily attended with a variety of disagreeable circumstances; but these ought nevertheless to be submitted to, sooner than put up with humiliations and disgraces; which, in the end, often detrimented a nation more than war itself.

In the mean time, it was become necessary to let the nation be fully apprized of the ultimate resolves of ministry respecting America. This was done in the House of Commons, by a long speech, wherein the present circumstances of affairs in America were detailed with great accuracy. The behaviour of the different Colonies was pointed out, and the conduct necessary to be observed with each. The universal fermentation prevailing among them, was asserted to proceed from unwarrantable arts and practices to dispose them against the ruling powers in Britain. It was asserted, too, that notwithstanding all their complaints, the public charges borne by individuals in America, were, on the strictest computation, not more than one to fifty, when compared with what was paid by individuals in England.

So immense a disparity, removed at once all reasons for complaining. Nothing but a settled determination to quarrel with the parent state, could induce the Americans to persist in their disobedience to the lawful injunctions laid upon them, which were neither injudicious nor oppressive; but on the contrary, framed with all possible lenity, and counter-balanced by advantages which were not possessed by the inhabitants of Great Britain.

It was therefore a spirit of resistance that animated America, and not a discontent at oppressions, which it was plain did not exist. Upon this ground

ground the quarrel now stood ; and every measure now adopted should be founded upon that idea. This, in the ministers own words, " was the great barrier which disunited both countries ; and on this ground alone of resistance and denial, he would raise every argument leading to the motion he intended to make for an address to the King, and for a conference with the Lords, that it might be the joint address of both Houses."

The measures now proposed to the House, were to send a greater force to America, and to pass a temporary act, suspending all the foreign trade of the different Colonies of New England, and particularly the Newfoundland fishery, until they consented to acknowledge the supreme authority of the British legislature, pay obedience to the laws of this realm, and make a due submission to the King ; upon doing of which, these restrictions should be taken off, and their real grievances, upon making proper application, should be redressed.

The expressions of ministry were very clear and explicit upon this occasion, New England, they said, as most culpable, was justly singled out as an object of punishment. The other Colonies, as less faulty, would, it was hoped, be brought back with less compulsion. But " the question now lay within a very narrow compass : it was simply, whether we would abandon all claims on the Colonies, and give up, at once, all the advantages arising from our sovereignty, and the commerce dependant on it ; or whether we should resort to the measures indispensably necessary to ensure both ? "

The address voted in consequence of the ministerial motion, fully coincided with all his views. It represented the Colony of Massachuset to be in actual rebellion, and encouraged by the other Colonies. It declared the resolution of Parliament to maintain

maintain the supreme authority of the British legislature in every part of the King's dominions. It besought him to enforce this authority by the power constitutionally lodged in his hands; and assured him of their concurrence, at all hazards, to support him in the prosecution of such measures.

An address of this kind was in effect a declaration of war against America. It was considered as such by the opposition, and the consequences which it would have, were pointed out with the utmost freedom. Some, indeed, contended that the accusation of rebellion fixed upon the Province of Massachuset, was false: the people there had done no more than what the constitution allowed: they had resisted arbitrary measures, after the examples that had so frequently been set them at home.

But whether they deserved to be stigmatized as rebels or not, such an appellation was dangerous, and might better be spared. It would only serve to aggravate, and render such as might think it levelled at them, desperate, and to inspire them with a determination to resist the efforts of Britain to the last drop of their blood, from the apprehension that their properties and lives were become forfeited.

The singling out of Massachuset as most deserving of chastisement, would avail nothing. The other Colonies knew themselves as deep in the conspiracy, and expected, in their turn, no better treatment. To chastise one, was to chastise all. If Britain meant to assert her authority with a high hand, her preparations must take in all who were concerned against her; and not imagine that the reduction of one Colony would suffice. They were all formed into one body; and to defeat a part, would now put the rest more upon their guard. It was idle to aim at disuniting them; they knew their

situation

situation too well to betray each other : it was equally nugatory to express more anger at one than at another : opprobrious epithets, or infidious blandishments, were lost upon them. Their conduct and language were equally open and unequivocal, and amounted to a clear determination to remain united in defence of their liberties, until such concessions were made on our part, as would fully quiet the apprehensions they entertained for their safety. Britain, therefore, must now consider, which of the two was the most advisable, peace or war ; not with one, but with all her Colonies.

It was replied by the ministerial party, that rebellious deeds constituted rebellion. The conduct of the people in Massachuset could be viewed in no other light. They had, by open force, resisted the execution of the laws ; which in England being reputed rebellion, cannot in America be called by another name. It was not intended to exercise any more severity than might be absolutely requisite. Mercy would be shown, and extended with the utmost liberality to all who submitted ; but it was highly necessary to make a strong discrimination between the deluded and the deluders. Policy and justice demanded these as victims for the good of the community ; on these alone the vengeance of Britain would fall.

High stress was laid upon the union of the Colonies ; but a little time would show with how much impropriety. When once they beheld the spirit of Britain thoroughly roused, they would soon retreat from the field of action, and humble themselves before her. They were associated upon principles that would not support them ; the self-denying regulations upon which their confederacy was founded, were too hostile to the interest and feelings of individuals, to bind them long together,

Impatience at such unnatural restraints, and private selfishness would break through them, and show how little they were acquainted with human nature who could rely upon so weak a foundation.

But there were also other motives to view with unconcern, and even with contempt this parade of union among the Colonies. The natives of America, it was said, had nothing of the soldier in them; they were averse to discipline, and incapable of military subordination: they were even of a fearful and spiritless disposition; sloathful, uncleanly, and of a constitution easily subdued by sickness and fatigue. These were not a people to face a British army. Small would be the force necessary to reduce them to obedience, and to put an end to all their projects of independence.

After a long and violent altercation, the question was carried for the address by a division of two hundred and ninety-six, to one hundred and six.

But the importance of the subject that had been debated was such, that the minority made a motion shortly after, to re-commit the address. It was argued that the consequences that would probably result from the prosecution of the measures it recommended, impelled them to solicit the House for a re-consideration of it: they appeared of such magnitude, that no time or attention could be misemployed in a fresh investigation.

A recapitulation followed of the dangers that would inevitably attend a war with America. The likelihood of other powers interfering, and the immense risks we should incur for the sake of an object far beneath such a terrible contention. Should Great Britain triumph over all opposition, what would prove her gains? No more than what she was substantially possessed of at that very hour: the emoluments

luments accruing from the commerce of America. But should fortune prove unpropitious, what would then be her situation? An answer to this question could not be made, without conveying a sensation of horror to every man that felt for his country. A motion, therefore, to re-commit an address of so serious a tendency, wherein, perhaps, the very existence of the British empire was involved, ought certainly to be received without hesitation by every man who professed impartiality and candour.

A long debate followed this motion, and was supported throughout with all the abilities and eloquence of the two contending parties. The truth was, they both felt the magnitude and importance of the question before them: so great a one had not been agitated in Parliament during the present century.

All that mass of argumentation was re-produced on this occasion, which had composed the materials of the numberless debates that had filled both Houses of Parliament during the last ten years, and had been repeated all over the nation to no other purpose than to breed ill blood among the disputants.

The sum of this famous debate was, that ministry contended in the same manner it had done before, for the necessity of drawing the sword, and manfully asserting the rights and the dignities of the parent state. Lenity was now become a subject of derision in the Colonies; and was imputed to imbecility and fears. The Americans, through long forbearance, were become incorrigible by any other than harsh means. They thought themselves in a condition to abolish the sovereignty of Britain in America, and were now resolved to do it. It was incumbent on every native of Britain, in such a case, to stand forth, and to vindicate the interest and

and glory of his country : it was the duty of Parliament and ministry to summon every particle of spirit that was left in the nation, to a contest wherein all that was dear to them, as individuals as well as a people, was so deeply involved.

The Americans had forgotten the hand that had planted and reared them : they were become unmindful of that protection and those bounties they were perpetually receiving from the generosity of Britain. It behoved us, if we valued our own character, to make them sensible that we were still the great and potent people they acknowledged us, while we were showering favours upon them. It was to these favours they owed the grandeur and opulence at which they were now arrived. We had but lately saved them from conquest and slavery ; and they now repaid us with an accusation of tyranny : this was ingratitude in the extreme, as our requisitions from them were small, even in the avowal of their warmest friends, and their power to grant them no less undeniable ; but their inclinations were to deny every request we should make.

To temporize in the midst of so much provocation, would be to encourage further insults and outrages. Britain had nothing else, indeed, to expect, until she had put an effectual stop to the power of committing them. The whole conduct of the Americans breathed hatred and defiance. The Congress, with an appearance of moderation, was taking every possible measure to destroy the authority of Britain throughout the Colonies, and to devolve it upon themselves. All the acts and proceedings of that Assembly amply justified such an assertion : they tended uniformly to inflame the people against Great Britain, by representing all her measures as framed with an intent to introduce a despotic government into the Colonies.

As to the suggestions of danger from foreign powers, they from whom it was hinted this danger would chiefly arise, had colonies to manage as well as Great Britain. It was hardly to be apprehended that they would be guilty of so much impolicy as to encourage rebellions in other colonies, which might, on the first occasion, become precedents for imitation in their own.

A proper reinforcement in America would encourage those to declare themselves, who, from the uncertainty of our measures, though they remained still our secret friends, dared not step forth and avow their sentiments: these, if duly supported, would prove no inconsiderable number; and, added to the forces that would be stationed among them, would counterbalance the power of the malcontents.

In answer to these assertions it was argued by the opposition, that the address was in itself a measure replete with barbarity, no less than with imprudence: it tended to put arms into the hands of every man throughout the continent who suspected the designs of the British administration, and to expose to ill usage and ruin, every person who was known or imagined to be a friend to Britain.

The rigour of the law should never be carried into politics. Were the Americans ever so culpable, ministry ought not to have perceived their guilt, unless it had, at the same time, discovered a safe and ready method of bringing them to punishment without endangering the safety of the state.

The idea of becoming independent was imputed to the Americans; but what were the proofs of this imputation? They repeatedly denied it in words; and their actions, until the present unfortunate difference, had always been full of loyalty and attachment.

If any thing could bring about independency, it would be the conduct of ministry, who, by driving them to despondency, would compel them to adopt measures, to which they were not otherwise inclined. The most loyal and obedient subjects will not have patience for ever, in cases of tyrannical treatment. They will rise at last, and assert their rights; and they who stile them rebels on that account, should remember that oppression not only generates, but justifies resistance.

There were in all nations opinions generally received, which good policy would respect, while they produced no bad consequences. The persuasion prevailing in America, that internal taxation belonged to their own Assemblies exclusively, had always been established among them without contradiction from this side of the water. It ought not to have been attacked at so improper a season as the present, after having been virtually recognized by the repeal of several acts made in contradiction of it, and after it had been explicitly approved by some of the most learned and intelligent men in this kingdom.

The opinions of which the Americans are so tenacious, ought therefore to be treated with the less disrespect, as they are not only their own, but those of numbers of people in this country. Authorized and countenanced in this manner, was it surprising they should continue inflexible in their resolutions to adhere to them? especially as they were founded upon a prescription that had lasted from their first settlement in that part of the world, a space of time consisting now of more than one hundred and fifty years, during which they had remained in the uninterrupted possession of the priviledges of which we now sought to deprive them.

It was the greatest of misfortunes to a state, when those who ruled it, endeavoured, without appa-

rent necessity, to alter the system and maxims of governing long adopted, and the utility of which had been confirmed by experience. Such was, however, the case of Britain : that mildness and benignity which was wont to direct the measures of former ministers, was now laid aside as obsolete : severity and inimicalness had taken their place : implicit obedience was now imposed upon the Colonies, as the only condition upon which Great Britain would relax of her displeasure, and suspend the hostile operations designed against them.

But was war and conquest the medium of rendering their possession useful to this country ? Would the conflict prove of no duration ? Were the scandalous falsehoods of cowardice and imbecility, so wantonly charged upon the Americans, to be ever so well grounded, still the very nature of their country would fight for them : that alone would impede, considerably, our military enterprizes, and greatly retard the subjugation of so immense a continent ; mean while the finews of war would quickly be relaxed. The suspension of so considerable a commerce as that of our Colonies, would cast a damp on all our operations.

Allowing, however, that British valour would triumph as heretofore in the plains of America, what must inevitably be the consequences of such a conquest ? The Colonies, instead of peaceable and affectionate fellow subjects, descended from common parents, and united by every endearing tie to the people of Great Britain, would henceforward consider themselves as a conquered nation, bound to us by no other motives than those of fear. Such a situation would necessarily call for armies to enforce subjection : the sums wanted to maintain them, would exhaust the profits derived from the country they overawed, and render it hardly worth the keeping.

Were

Were these the ends for which Great Britain was so eagerly to contend? Did ministers imagine the inhabitants of this country would passively consent to see their purses drained, and their strength wasted in pursuit of schemes so evidently marked with infatuation, and which, at best, would only leave us where they found us? What more would they produce than the retention of America? But was not that our own already, without putting it to stake by a war of which the issue was so precarious?

The principles that actuated ministers were totally repugnant to the spirit of the constitution. There was a time when loftiness and pride were only thought proper to be assumed with the avowed enemies of this nation; and when condescension and lenity were viewed as the duty of ministers towards the subject; but an odious change had happened: submission and deference was shown to foreigners, while our own people were treated with haughtiness. This was reversing the long established rule of English politics. But let not those who had introduced this insulting innovation, promise themselves impunity: arbitrary conduct was so intolerable to the people of this land, that they would not suffer it either when levelled at themselves, or at their fellow subjects in any other part of the British dominions.

Ministers might, for a while, carry on their measures elatedly, and look upon opposition with contempt; but a day would come, when the good sense of the nation would deprive them of those majorities of which they now made such a boast. When the iniquity and folly of their measures had been fully proved by events, then the public would rise upon them as one man, and call them to account for the mischief they had brought upon it.

This, they might depend, would be their fate. The only chance they had to escape from the justice

of their country, was the progress of that corruption and venality through which they were now enabled to contrive its ruin ; but even that would have its bounds : public calamities, when risen to their highest pitch, demanded for victims those who had caused them ; and superceded all other feelings but those of indignation and revenge : the annals of all nations were confirmations of this truth.

In order to obviate these calamities, and to do justice to themselves as well as to the Americans, the people of England ought seriously to ponder, whether they had a right to pass condemnation over a numerous division of British subjects, who not only claimed, but were unquestionably entitled to every right enjoyed by Englishmen. In this case, the first position they should lay down, was, that ancestry and locality gave no right of dominion to one nation over another : were such a maxim once to be admitted, the world would be thrown into endless confusion, and no prince or state would be safe from foreign pretensions.

The only just and righteous principle on which to conduct so important an examination, was to consider the respective powers and faculties of each party, and how far they were obliged to contribute to the common exigencies of the empire. If, upon a due estimation of these, it appeared that a reasonable proportion of supplies was denied, the party that was aggrieved by this denial, would clearly be intitled to tax the other with injustice, and to compel him to an equitable reparation.

But was this the principle that guided administration ? Did they not, on the contrary, revive by their conduct the long-exploded doctrine of hereditary right ? Which, though just and necessary when applied to property, was not admissible in England in matters of government ; and was not, therefore,

therefore, applicable to the question depending between Great Britain and America.

In contradiction to this fundamental principle of the British constitution, ministry insisted upon a passive obedience in the Colonies: they were required to submit to the dictates of Great Britain, for no other reason than that she was the parent state. Was there no better motive to influence their obedience, no body could blame them for refusing it. But the ties between Britain and her Colonies are of a far nobler, as well as much more binding nature: origin and consanguinity, though highly to be prized, were not the most valuable: it was the constitution transmitted to them from Britain, and the brotherly assistance they had hitherto experienced from Englishmen, that ought to render the name sacred to them. While those ties remained unviolated, we had no room to complain of their behaviour; but absolute lords and masters were titles they would not recognize in Englishmen, any more than these would recognize them in any others.

When ministers acted on such unwarrantable grounds, the question was no longer, whether the measures they proposed should be taken into consideration, but whether they themselves ought not instantly to be deprived of the power which they used so unconstitutionally. The dispute, therefore, was now, not between Great Britain and America, but between the ministry and the constitution; and the question was, "Whether we should lose our Colonies, or give up our ministers.

Charges of so heavy a nature were of course retorted by the ministerial party, with equal asperity. All the resistance and disturbances in America, were imputed to the opposition in plainer and more explicit terms than ever. A factious republican spirit was gone forth, that actuated every writer and speaker

in the American cause : it filled the nation with disloyalty, and the House with incendiaries. America, it was said, would never have hoisted the standard of rebellion, if the trumpet of sedition had not been heard in Britain.

This violent debate lasted till three o'clock in the morning, when the motion for re-committing the address, was rejected by two hundred and eighty-eight, against one hundred and five.

In this manner was terminated the most important business that had, in the memory of man, engaged the attention of the British Parliament. Not only the natives of this country, but all Europe was impatient to learn the decision of this great question. While it was impending, the foreign ministers in London were continually employed in watching the motions of administration, and the debates of Parliament : they justly considered it as pregnant with consequences that might eventually give a new turn to the face of all Europe.

On the very next day a conference was held before the two Houses, wherein they
1775. both agreed to unite in the address.

In the mean time petitions had been preparing by the London merchants trading to America, and from those concerned in the West India trade, to be laid before the House of Lords. The Marquis of Rockingham, as the principal Peer in the opposition, was applied to on this occasion to present them, but he was prevented by a previous motion in favour of the address.

This however did not hinder a long debate concerning the propriety and necessity of receiving them. It was carried on with no less heat and animosity of expression than that which had taken place the day before in the House of Commons.

The papers, on the veracity of which the address had been framed, were represented by the opposition

tion as partial and mutilated, and unfit for proper documents in so weighty a matter. It was for this reason the duty of the House to attend with the more readiness to the representation of the merchants; whose testimony, as persons deeply and essentially interested in bringing truth to light in this important juncture, might be depended on with much greater safety.

It was their particular desire to be heard, before the House took any determination relating to America. To refuse this, it was urged, would be to tell the world, that right or wrong, its determination would be against the sense of their petition. Was this a warrantable treatment of respectable and loyal subjects, who were endeavouring to serve the state, by affording to government all the information they were masters of. Good policy required the House to hearken to them, as well as equity and good manners.

It was answered by the ministerial party, that no disrespect was intended to persons of so much consequence in this commercial nation, as the merchants whose petition was now in the House: that it was with great grief administration was obliged to declare, it could not be received consistently with the general interests of the kingdom. They were desired seriously to consider, how necessary it was become to prevent the evils threatened to this country by the proceedings in America; that were they permitted to continue, the commercial grandeur of this nation would suffer a fatal diminution, if not a total overthrow, in which no individuals would be greater sufferers than themselves. It became them, from so just a motive, to confide in the wisdom of Parliament, as it was not doubted that events would hereafter convince them, that by asserting the supremacy of the British legislature, in the manner

proposed, all those advantages would be secured, about which they were so justly solicitous. They were exhorted to submit to the temporary inconveniences which might result from the resolutions that must be adopted in the present circumstances of public affairs. They would not probably be of long duration, and would be followed by a state of prosperity, which would be the more permanent, from the removal of the obstacles which they were now about to encounter.

The debate relating to the address, carried the speakers on both sides into a wide field of discussion. The two greatest Law Lords in the kingdom, entered into a contest, wherein their learning and eloquence was reciprocally displayed with the greatest conspicuity. The point in contention was to ascertain whether the Americans were in actual rebellion. The different opinions they held on this weighty subject, and the variety of arguments with which they combated each other, afforded a melancholy proof of the uncertainty of the law, in a case where it ought particularly to be perspicuous, and void of all manner of intricacy.

A repetition took place, on this occasion, of all those arguments against the Americans that have already been mentioned. It was represented, that upon emergencies of this nature, a state that is bent upon asserting its authority or its dignity, must not expect to go through such an arduous undertaking without many difficulties. All orders and denominations would severally be aggrieved by the hardships concomitant on hostilities. But they were no more than what befel the community at large in every nation that waged war. The situation of Britain would not be worse than that of her enemies. But whatever destiny might await us, whether victory or defeat, whether we should preserve or lose

America,

America, still the trial must be made. It would be pusillanimity to give it up without disputing its possession to the utmost of our power: Englishmen were not wont tamely to relinquish advantages;—wherever the standard of Britain is planted, it ought to be vigorously defended, and every loss patiently borne, except that of national honour.

The arguments used in the reply made to this reasoning by the minority, were much the same as had been employed in the House of Commons against the address. Their general intent was to prove the imprudence of precipitating the kingdom into a war, which if unsuccessful, would reduce it to the brink of ruin, and to which there appeared no sufficient reason to hope for success, when we took into consideration the probability of that universal confederacy which would be formed against Britain by her numerous enemies on the European, as well as on the American continent.

It was particularly noticed, that a subject involving so many consequences of the last importance, had been driven, as it were, through both Houses with a hurry equally unworthy of its magnitude and their own dignity. So much haste was, according to the proverb, never attended with good speed. It evinced the apprehensions of ministry, that were due time given thoroughly to investigate their measures, their injudiciousness would not fail to be discovered. Why should they otherwise be so eager to bring them to a conclusion? A length of time would elapse before it would be possible to commence their execution; had that interval been dedicated to a mature discussion of the various matter deserving Parliamentary notice, elucidations would have followed, which might have thrown new light upon objects, which could not be too thoroughly attended to.

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The whole night was consumed in this debate; it concluded with the total defeat of the Marquis of Rockingham's motion: the numbers for him were only twenty-nine, those against him one hundred and four.

This defeat produced a remarkable protest, drawn up with uncommon energy, and which strongly characterized the temper of the opposition at that period. It concluded in the following words, which may be considered as a summary of the sentiments entertained by the opponents to ministry, both in Parliament, and throughout the nation.

“ The means of enforcing the authority of the British legislature is confided to persons who have hitherto used no effectual means of conciliating, or of reducing those who oppose that authority: This appears in the constant failure of all their projects, the insufficiency of all their information, and the disappointment of all the hopes which they have for several years held out to the public. Parliament has never refused any of their proposals, and yet our affairs have proceeded from bad to worse, until we have been brought step by step, to that state of confusion and violence, which was the natural result of desperate measures.

“ We therefore protest against an address founded on no proper Parliamentary information, which was introduced by refusing to suffer the presentation of petitions against it, (although it be the undoubted right of the subject to present the same) which followed the rejection of every mode of conciliation; which holds out no substantial offer of redress of grievances, and which promises support to those ministers who have inflamed America, and grossly misconducted the affairs of Great Britain.”

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The address thus jointly voted by both Houses, was carried to the throne, and answered with an assurance of taking due measures to enforce its contents, and a message exhorting Parliament to make speedy provision for the effectually carrying into execution the measures they recommended.

C H A P. IX.

Transactions in Great Britain relating to America.

1775.

AFTER providing a military force to be stationed at Boston, it was perceived that farther measures would be necessary to execute the plan proposed. Soldiers might quell insurrections and insults, but could not enforce the observance of laws and regulations, without the intervention of the magistracy; and it was evident that no assistance of this kind was to be expected from the people of Massachusetts.

They beheld with silent abhorrence the coercive scheme that had been formed to compel their obedience to the injunctions of the British legislature. Though they abstained from active resistance, they were determined to throw every impediment in the way of compulsion, and if they could not face it openly, to fatigue it by indirect and secret opposition.

The difficulty lay in procuring assistance from the inferior body of magistrates; as few of them were well-wishers to the measures in agitation, it was found impracticable to employ them in their execution; yet it was only through such means the commonalty was to be brought to a state of regular and peaceable obedience.

As the indissoluble adherence to each other among all orders and classes in Massachusetts, rendered it impossible to seek for co-operators among them, and as the ministry was fully determined to proceed on the plan of coercion, the only method remaining to make it effectual, was to extend it in such a manner,

manner, as to affect indiscriminately all the inhabitants of the Province without exception. By including them in one general punishment, it would become the interest of all to conform unanimously to the laws enacted for them, in order the more speedily to procure its removal.

To this intent a bill was brought into Parliament, the purport of which was, to restrain the commerce of the four Provinces of New England to Great Britain, Ireland, and the English islands in the West Indies, and to prohibit them from carrying on the fishery at Newfoundland.

The reasons alledged in support of this proposal were, that as the Colonies had entered into agreements not to trade with Britain, we were entitled to prevent them from trading with any other country. Their charter restricted them to the act of navigation; the relaxations from it were favours, to which by their disobedience they had no further pretence. The Newfoundland fisheries were the ancient property of Great Britain, and disposable therefore at her will and discretion: it was no more than just to deprive rebels of the use of them.

Though the other Provinces of New England did not seem directly concerned in the rebellion, yet the British government was so little respected there, that they deserved little more indulgence than that of Massachuset. In New Hampshire, the populace had seized upon a powder magazine, in one of the King's forts; and from the neighbourhood of that Province, and the temper of its inhabitants, the act would be eluded, unless they were included in it.

Connecticut manifested the same disposition.—Upon the report of a fray between the soldiery and the people of Boston, that Province rose in great numbers, and marched directly to their assistance.

nnce. This showed at once what we had to expect from that quarter.

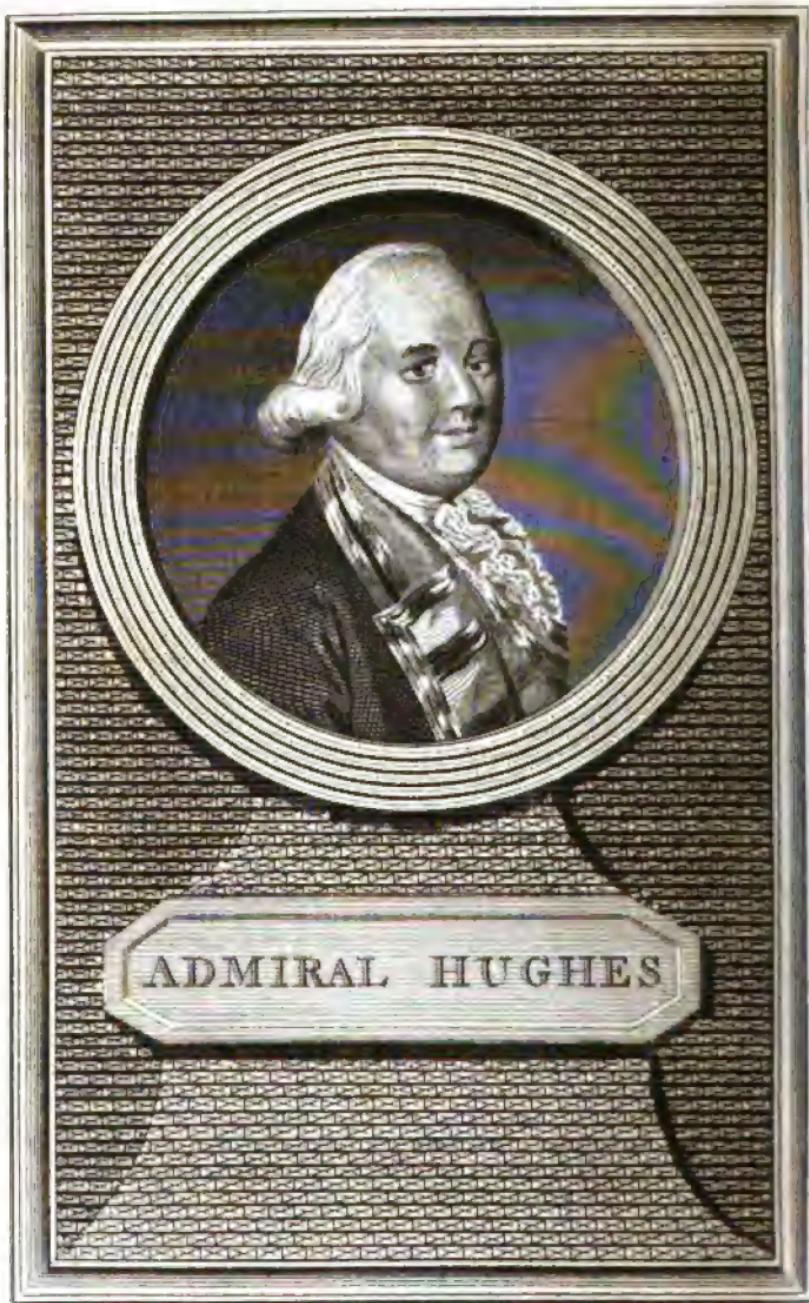
As an alleviation to the severity of this act, it was proposed, that all persons should be excepted from it whose good behaviour the Governor of the Province would certificate, or who should subscribe a test acknowledging the rights of Parliament.

This bill was received by the opposition with every expression of disapprobation. It was particularly reprobated for involving such a multitude of innocent people in its operation. Half a million of people were condemned to famine for the delinquency of a few, on a supposition they were guilty. This was a precedent unknown in countries governed by just and equitable laws, and could only be found in the transactions of tyrants.

But were Massachuset guilty, why must the infliction of so severe a chastisement extend to its neighbours? This was an excess of resentment which nothing could justify: it belied the mildness of character which had hitherto done so much honour to the British legislature; and was beside an act of impolicy that would raise up foes to Britain where it had none before. When people found that we made no discrimination between our friends and enemies, they would join with the latter to rescue themselves from universal oppression.

Britain, in the present instance, treated her own subjects much worse than she had ever done her avowed and most inveterate enemies. During the many wars between England and France, hostilities had been restrained to the nation, and never exercised upon individuals. Our fleets and armed vessels had always spared the fishing craft of the enemy: this was a rule from which they never deviated, even in the most bloody contentions. It was beneath the character of a civilized and generous people.





ADMIRAL HUGHES

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people to molest poor fishermen, and to deprive the wretched inhabitants of a sea-coast of their food.

New England, they all knew, subsisted upon its fisheries; the produce of these were bartered for various necessaries. It was also the medium that enabled them to settle accounts with Britain, for the various demands they were perpetually making upon her merchants. Thus to cut them off from this resource, would be to stop their payments to Britain: this, in fact, would be throwing upon themselves the punishment intended for them.

Should this bill operate to the extent proposed, the effects produced by it would reach farther than it was ever designed. In case of a future reconciliation with the Colonies, the laborious and indigent classes employed in the fishery, would by that time necessarily have taken themselves to other occupations for their subsistence, and it would be a difficult matter to return them to their former business. In the interval, the profitable trade might fall into the hands of other nations, who would, of course, use all their endeavours to retain it. Britain was too far distant to engross it wholly to herself, and would have too many objects to distract her attention in consequence of this quarrel, to take any more than ordinary care of this branch of her trade.

Another evil would arise from this bill, which the ministry did not appear to foresee. By declaring war again the Colonies, and depriving them of their fisheries, the fishermen were driven into the immediate service of rebellion; they would man privateers, and accelerate the levies of troops they were making; and being robust and hardy men, would prove the best recruits that could be found. Thus it was clear that this bill, in whatever light it was viewed, was highly disreputable and pernicious.

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The further allegations, on the other hand, in favour of the bill were, that Britain herein acted only by way of retaliation and self-defence against the Colonies. The precedent was their own; they had combined, as far as in them lay, to destroy our commerce and manufactures, and to reduce our islands to the utmost distress. Had any European power acted in the manner they did, we should have done the same, and probably more.

The accusation of barbarity was equally groundless. No more was evidently meant than to compel the Colonies to pay just obedience to the parent state. The inconveniencies resulting from this bill they had brought upon themselves, and might put an end to whenever they pleased. The measure was vigorous, but not precipitate: it left them leisure to reflect on their situation, and to regain the good-will of Great Britain, by embracing the proffered means of reconciliation, which were a peaceable submission to the laws it had enacted.

In other countries a revolt met with a far heavier chastisement: forfeitures, corporal punishments, and death, were the usual methods employed upon such occasions, to bring rebellious subjects to reason.

It was with the sincerest grief that the friends of Britain were made partakers of the inconveniencies arising from this bill; but this was an inevitable consequence of these unhappy feuds. They would, from this consideration, be the first to excuse us: they knew that in war, friends and foes were often intermixed, and liable to suffer the same calamities.

Britain had long waited before she adopted this measure. It was now ten years since America not only threatened, but actually put it in execution. Thrice had the Colonies thrown our merchants and manufacturers into the utmost consternation:—It

was

was now our turn to try whether we could not intimidate them by the same means.

It behoved the people of Britain, if they had any spirit left, to crush at once this insulting disposition, which kept them in continual alarms, and rendered the possession of America a matter of more anxiety than advantage. It were even better to part with it at once, than to live in such a state of uncertainty and apprehension on its account.

The period was now arrived long wished for by America:—She now thought herself in a capacity to throw off all dependence upon Great Britain, and was determined to risk the attempt. It became Great Britain not to shrink from the contest: if she was not able to face the Americans, she was not worthy of ruling them.

The connection between Great Britain and her Colonies, were matters to remain on the present footing, was no longer definable: they acknowledged subjection, and yet would pay no obedience. Now was the time to ascertain it for a perpetuity.—If we were to remain masters of them, we should then know what settlement to make; and if we were to lose them, we should even, in that case, rid ourselves of infinite perplexity.

It was replied by the minority, that the spirit so repeatedly required by the ministry, however laudable in respect to foreign nations, could only be productive of evil in domestic contests. Those who acted in differences of this kind with most lenity and forbearance, were possessed of the spirit most to be desired on such occasions. That heat and impetuosity of conduct were the bane of all proceedings at home, was a truth acknowledged by all men; and it was upon this solid and unquestionable principle the ministry would be condemned by the unbiassed and impartial world.

Experience militated invincibly against the ministry. What were the effects produced by the spirit that dictated the last acts against Massachuset? Had they humbled that Colony? Had they terrified the Americans? Had they not, on the contrary, spirited up the whole American continent to an open and confirmed resistance? Why should other effects be expected from the further exertions of such a spirit?

The issue of this debate was, that the bill was carried for ministry, by two hundred and sixty-one votes, against eighty-five.

A petition against it was, however, presented by the London merchants concerned in the American trade: It was principally founded on the danger that would accrue to the fisheries of Great Britain from such a prohibition.

From the evidence which was brought in support of this petition, it appeared that the American fisheries were in so flourishing a condition ten years before the present period, that the four provinces of New England employed in that branch of trade alone, near forty-six thousand tons of shipping, and six thousand seamen; that the produce of their fisheries in the foreign markets, amounted in the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-four, to upwards of three hundred and twenty thousand pounds.

Since that time, the fisheries, together with their profits, had greatly increased. What rendered them particularly valuable, was, that all the materials used in them, (the salt for curing the fish, and the timber for building the vessels excepted) were purchased in Britain; and that the net proceeds of the trade were all remitted hither.

It also appeared, that it would not be practicable to transfer these fisheries to Halifax or Quebec, were ever such assistance or encouragement given to either

either of these places. They had neither vessels nor people to man them, and would never be able to procure supplies of seamen from New England: such was the aversion the government of those two settlements was held in by the natives of that Province.

A circumstance came out at the same time, in the course of this evidence, that was strongly insisted on as a just motive to recall this bill. The commercial concerns of the city of London, only, were so great and extensive in New England, that this latter stood indebted to it near a million sterling.

This was urged as a powerful argument against an act which would totally deprive the British merchants of all hopes of being paid so considerable a sum; as it could only arise out of the balance produced by the gains upon the fisheries.

It was shown at the same time, that the effects of this bill would be felt with great severity by some people, who were entirely innocent of the charges laid to the generality of the Americans: these were the inhabitants of the island of Nantucket, lying off the coast of New England. This barren spot, about fifteen miles long, and three broad, contained about six thousand souls, almost all Quakers: its products could not maintain twenty families; but the industry of the inhabitants was such, that they kept one hundred and thirty vessels constantly employed in the whale fishery, which they carried on in the North Seas, on the coasts of Africa and Brazil, and even so far as the Falkland islands, and the southern extremities of the Magellanic shores.

Were it only from the applause and encouragement due to so much industry and resolution, so remarkable a people ought to have been exempted from the general calamity; and it behoved the generosity of the British nation, to compassionate the case of this handful of brave and laborious men.

This particular case was, indeed, so remarkable and striking, that a motion was accordingly made on the side of administration, to procure them just and proper relief.

But in order, at the same time, to counteract the general intent of the petition against the bill, a second petition was presented by the merchants and principal inhabitants of the town of Poole, in direct opposition to that from London.

It represented that the restrictions intended by the bill against the New England fishery, would not prove any ways detrimental to the trade of England, which was fully able, with proper exertions, to supply the demands of foreign markets. The produce of this fishery already exceeded half a million, the whole of which centered in Britain; whereas much of the profits of the fisheries carried on by the Colonies, remained abroad.

What materially rendered the British Newfoundland fishery more beneficial to this country than that of New England, was that it bred a great number of hardy seamen, peculiarly fit for the service of the navy; whereas the New England seamen are, by act of Parliament, exempted from being pressed.

It appeared in the examination of those witnesses who supported this petition, that the fishery from Britain to Newfoundland, employed about four hundred ships, amounting to three hundred and sixty thousand tons, and two thousand shallops of twenty thousand, navigated by twenty thousand seamen. Six hundred thousand quintals of fish were taken every season; the returns of which were annually worth, on a moderate computation, five hundred thousand pounds.

But this representation did not prevent opposition from reprobating the bill, as tending, like the other acts lately passed, to exasperate the Colonies to a degree that would preclude all ideas of reconciliation.

ciliation. They would now look on Parliament as an avowed and declared enemy, taken up only with the search of means to distress them.

The ministry was accused of acting not only with barbarity, but absurdity. If their wishes and intentions went to the preservation of the British dominion over America, to what purpose did they strive to ruin that country? The most despotic princes, in their punishment of insurrections against their authority, carried it no further than against the principal delinquents: the bulk of the community, however guilty, was spared; and the general interest of the country still was consulted. But the resentment of our rulers knew no bounds; they involved in one common destruction the property and inhabitants of America, as if they had determined to render the possession of it of no value; and, indeed, as if they foresaw, that from their inability and imprudence, it would be lost for ever to the Crown of Great Britain.

They who spoke on the other side, were no less pointed and severe in their condemnation of the Americans, and of the constant sullenness and perversity with which they treated the condescending disposition of the parent state. They contended, at the same time, that this very bill against their fishery, however restrictive it might appear, would not produce those distresses that had been painted in such frightful colours. The idea of reducing them to real famine was ridiculous: the country abounded with provisions; they were, in some measure, the staple commodities of the land; and if some parts were deficient, others were plentiful. But were it true that they would be exposed to all manner of wretchedness, still it would be their own seeking; as submission to Britain would at once put an end to their misery.

Still, however, it was contended by opposition, that an act of such a nature would disgrace us in the eyes of Europe, and justify those malicious imputations of a cruel disposition, in which so many foreigners delighted. They would now have some ground for their reproaches : a bill brought into an assembly composed of the principal personages in the nation, with an avowed intent to destroy, by hunger, some hundred thousands of our fellow subjects whose guilt was disputable, would astonish all mankind, and excite the anger and indignation of all who professed the least humanity. The bill was absolutely atrocious; and those who could approve it, were men of no feeling.

A deed of this kind was not justifiable according to the most rigorous ideas of war; in the perpetration of the most violent hostilities, the extremest hatred and inveteracy would preserve a remnant of compassion for age, infancy, and sex; but the British Parliament was now to be steeled against all these considerations, and taught to sacrifice whole nations at once to the wrath and resentment of ministers.

What would be the fate of our countrymen at Boston in the midst of this universal calamity? Hunger, it was well known, would give courage to the fearful, and strength to the weak. The British military stationed in Massachusetts were but a handful; and it could not be expected they would be able to make an effectual stand against the desperate and enraged multitudes that would assail them night and day, in revenge for the barbarities exercised upon their country. They must necessarily sink under the weight of numbers, and add to the list of those victims doomed by ministerial haughtiness to destruction.

It was replied by the other party, that whatever descriptions the opponents to the bill might think proper

proper to make, of the deplorable condition to which it would bring the people of New England, still they proved no more, than that unless the inhabitants of that Colony returned to their duty and allegiance to Great Britain, they would experience a very severe punishment. This was not denied: it was even the object in view; and was certainly preferable to a denunciation of war, which would necessarily be followed with consequences far more terrible and destructive.

By this bill coercion undoubtedly was meant; but it was of an orderly and peaceable kind: the ability of Britain to crush all opposition in the Colonies, was now to be manifested; and what method more efficacious, and at the same time less hostile, could have been proposed than the present? Not a sword was to be drawn, nor musket fired; no blood, in short, was to be shed by this measure. It held the rod over the heads of the guilty; but it invited them to repentance: it threatened, but smote only those whose obstinacy extorted the blow. In a word, it affected none but such as were determined to suffer. It was therefore the height of malevolence and misrepresentation, to describe, as barbarous and inhuman, a mode of conduct which, when impartially and circumstantially examined, was evidently much less calculated to hurt than to terrify.

Nothing was more probable than that when the Colony of Massachuset became thoroughly sensible how entirely their fate rested in the hands of Britain, the most refractory and averse to obedience would see the futility of all their efforts against the superior might of this country. All classes would then unite in the cessation of a resistance, from which nothing but misery could be expected: they would even congratulate themselves on the temper and coolness with which the parent state had acted in

bringing them to a just perception of their inferiority, and their impotency to resist its will, whenever it was earnestly determined to enforce it. Thus a great and important end would be accomplished without employing sanguinary means; and Britain would have the satisfaction of quelling a rebellion without coming to hostilities.

In the House of Peers, the debates on this bill were carried on much in the same strain, Ministry brought witnesses to prove, from their own personal knowledge and experience, how greatly the British fishery might be increased in Newfoundland; and adduced a variety of arguments to show, that were America to be totally excluded from that fishery, the consequences would be highly beneficial to Great Britain; the number of our seamen would be augmented in proportion to the decrease of theirs, and our profits increased in the same degree,

The opposition on the other side, exerted itself to prove the general utility of the American trade, and the constant settled benefits resulting from it to this country, which were now rising daily to an importance truly astonishing. The progress of the trade to New England, was minutely traced from the commencement of this present century, when it amounted only to seventy thousand pounds, to the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-four, when it had arisen to one hundred and eighty thousand; but in the ten following years, notwithstanding a furious and extensive war, it increased to four hundred thousand pounds; and from the last peace to the present period, had gradually advanced to double that immense sum;

A country of which a single province took off such a quantity of merchandize from Great Britain, was not to be studiously depreciated by partial representations. It little mattered whether the profits of commerce were direct or circuitous; it was sufficient

sufficient if they were real. Though New England carried on a vast trade with other parts of the world, the demands from Britain in consequence of that trade, were prodigious, and answered our purpose as effectually as if we carried on that trade ourselves.

There was no occasion, therefore, to deprive any part of America of any particular branch of commerce, on a supposition that we should engross it to ourselves. This, if so practicable as represented, would require much time and attention: But was it prudent to run such a risk? Did we not receive already the same profits we proposed to derive from this alteration? The path was now smooth and easy; why should we be at the trouble of seeking out another, which, at best, would not be preferable to the present?

A variety of additional arguments were used to invalidate the propriety of the bill. The mutilation of the papers on which that information was founded, which was held forth to both Houses as authentic, was complained of in the bitterest terms: it was carrying on a system of deception unworthy of men of rank, who were intrusted with the public affairs: such a management of them, would lay them open to the severest resentment and prosecution, and leave them without any excuse for their justification. Parliament depended upon them for true and fair accounts of those transactions, by which its suffrages were to be guided: if false or defective the fault was solely their own, and they must answer for it to the justice of their country.

But the efforts of opposition were as unavailing in this, as in the other House. The absolute and indispensable necessity of coming to a final conclusion of the American business, overcame all other ideas: total sovereignty, or total loss, were judged the happiest alternative for Great Britain; its councils had been

been distracted for more than ten years by incessant altercations on this subject ; it was become odious and disgusting, as it filled the whole nation, from the very highest to the very lowest classes, with reciprocal inveteracy. The method proposed would bring matters to a speedy decision ; which, whatever it might be, was preferable to a constant scene of domestic confusion.

In virtue of these arguments, the majority of the House loudly declared for the bill. It was passed by one hundred and four to twenty-nine.

So resolutely was the House of Peers bent upon acting with the utmost rigour and severity, as the most eligible means of bringing America to reason, that it proposed to include in the restrictions enacted by this bill, the Provinces of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Carolina ; in this, however, they did not meet with the concurrence of the House of Commons ; and the bill was passed without this addition.

It produced a remarkable protest. The Lords who framed it, spoke with uncommon severity of the system on which the bill was founded. " That " governtment, said they, which attempts to pre- " serve its authority by destroying the trade of its " subjects, and by involving the innocent and " guilty in a common ruin, if it acts from a choice " of such means, confesses itself unworthy ; if " from inability to find any other, admits itself " wholly incompetent to the end of its institution."

They accused the ministry of endeavouring to purchase the nation's consent to this act, by promising them the spoils of the New England fishery. This, they said, was " a scheme full of weakness and in- " decency ; of indecency, because it may be sus- " pected that the desire of the confiscation has cre- " ated the guilt ; and of weakness, because it sup- " poses

“ poses that whatever is taken from the Colonies,
“ is of course to be transferred to ourselves.”

This protest took severe notice of an opinion, which some persons laboured industriously to circulate throughout the nation ; and which had been maintained in both Houses of Parliament. This was the assertion of which notice has already been taken, that the Americans wanted spirit to go through what they had undertaken ; and that Britain would find them an easy conquest.

An opinion of this kind was represented by the friends of America, as highly unbecoming such an assembly as that wherein it had been delivered. It was not supported by truth, and could only be viewed as the effusion of party resentment ; it was thrown out in the heat of debate, as an inducement to coincide with the measures in agitation, and to remove all apprehension of the dangers which might arise from their prosecution.

But it was further asserted, that a charge of this kind was the more imprudent and unadvised, as exclusive of its containing a false and injurious accusation, it tended in case of coercive measures, to slacken the care and solicitude with which they ought to be pursued ; and to occasion remissness in those to whom they might be intrusted, from a persuasion that the enemy to be encountered was not deserving of much fear, and required but little pains to be overcome.

C H A P. X.

Military and Naval preparations against America.—Lord North's Conciliatory Motion.—Petition from Jamaica in favour of the Colonies.—Act for restraining the Commerce of the Southern Colonies.—Mr. Burke's Conciliatory Plan.—Mr. Hartley's Motion to the same intent.

FEW acts of Parliament were ever received with more approbation from one party, and more disapprobation from the other, than this bill for restraining the commerce of New England, and depriving it of its fisheries. While it was applauded by the one as a judicious and necessary measure, it was reprobated by the other with the utmost vehemence and indignation, and represented as the genuine offspring of that tyrannical spirit which had by its opponents so long been imputed to administration.

Numbers of those who favoured the cause of the Americans, were studiously outrageous in their complaints against this bill : they loaded it with every opprobrious epithet they could devise ; and, among other injurious names, they called it the act of starvation.

In the mean time, as Great Britain had now taken her final resolution, ministry was employed in making those preparations that were judged requisite to carry it into execution.

The number of troops intended for New England, amounted to ten thousand men. This, according to the opinion of those military men who were consulted upon this occasion, appeared a force fully sufficient to execute the measures of government,

But

But this opinion was strenuously opposed. Such a force was represented as totally inadequate to the end proposed, and as only productive of much expense to little purpose.

Ministry was charged with equal imprudence for engaging the nation in hostilities, and for its manner of conducting them. Since America is to be subdued, said opposition, let it be done effectually; let a fleet and army be sent forth, in the strength of which the public may justly confide; such as may, by its very appearance, intimidate. The first impression ought, if possible to be decisive, and every effort should be made to render it such.

In this idea of the minority, not only their own adherents, but many of their antagonists as readily concurred. The only reason alledged for acting otherwise, was that an expectation had been formed, that the Americans, upon a mature consideration of the matter, would think it more consistent with their interest to desist from, than to continue an opposition that would certainly involve them in blood-shed and desolation; and which, were it to succeed, would entail such expences, losses, and mischiefs upon their country, as would require many years to repair.

Before the scene of action was entered upon, the ministry resolved once more to attempt a reconciliation with America. A motion was accordingly made in the House of Commons, importing, that when the Governor, Council, and Assembly of any of the Colonies, shall propose to make provision, according to their respective circumstances, for the common defence, such proportion to be raised under the authority of the Colony, and disposable by Parliament; and shall engage to provide for the support of the civil government, and the administration of justice, it will then be proper, if such proposal should be approved of by the King in Parliament, to forbear levying

or

or imposing any taxes on that Colony; those duties excepted, that may be expedient to impose for the regulation of commerce, the net produce of which shall be carried to the account of the Colony where it is raised.

This motion was grounded on the sincere desire of giving America full proof how far it was from the intentions of Britain to adopt harsh measures, if they could possibly be avoided. Parliament, in its late address to the Throne respecting the Colonies, not only meant to show its final determination to support the claims of Great Britain, at all hazards, but also its willingness, upon proper concessions, to restore America to her favour. That notwithstanding the British legislature could not give up the right of taxation, yet if the Americans would propose such a mode of contribution, as might at once be agreeable to themselves, and answer the end, Parliament would consent to suspend the exercise of that right, and yield to America the authority of raising in their own manner, their share of the contribution.

A resolution adopted on the ground of this motion would, it was said, be "an infallible touch-stone to try the sincerity of the Americans. If their professions were real, and their opposition founded only upon the principles which they pretended, they must, consistently with those principles, agree with this proposition. But if they were actuated by sinister motives, and had dangerous designs in contemplation, their refusal of these terms would expose them to the world.— We should then be prepared, and know how to act. After having shown our wisdom, our justice, and our humanity, by giving them an opportunity of redeeming their past faults, and holding out to them fitting terms of accommodation: if they should reject them, we should be

" be justified in taking the most coercive measures."

The opposition received this proposal with the utmost disapprobation. It was, they said, in no wise conciliatory: it was replete with insidiousness, and would appear such in the eyes of the Americans. The motives held out to the nation for uniting with ministry against America, were now, it was said, entirely changed. The honour and dignity of Great Britain were lately the sole principle on which they exhorted men to act; obedience to the commercial regulations enacted by Parliament, and allegiance to the supreme sovereignty of this country, was their constant language: but they now abandoned that argument; the contest was now to be for a prize of another nature, the acquisition of a revenue. This probably they deemed an object more interesting to the generality in a commercial nation, and for the obtaining of which people would be found more willing to exert themselves, than for a mere acknowledgment of superior dignity, by which neither the power of the state would receive any augmentation, nor the condition of individuals any relief.

In the mode of taxation proposed for America, there was no essential difference from that which had been adopted before, and insisted upon as legal. The Colonies were as completely taxed without their consent by requiring them to pay a stated sum, levied in their own manner, as by laying a number of duties on them to the same amount.

Another objection occurred, equally militating against the acceptance of this proposal by the Americans. No sum was specified; they were left totally ignorant what the demands of Britain might be: this was an unpardonable defect in proposals of which they ought to have the clearest elucidation laid before them, in order to judge whether it was in

in their power, allowing it to be in their inclination, to accede to them.

After a long dispute the question was carried for the ministry, by two hundred and seventy-four votes, to eighty-eight.

In the mean time, the situation of the Colonies of North America, had excited, in a particular manner, the attention of the British islands in the West Indies. Incapable, from their situation, of resisting the authority of Great Britain in the same manner, they beheld silently the progress of a dispute which threatened to terminate in such terrible consequences. One of them, however, ventured to espouse their cause in a petition to the throne: this was the island of Jamaica, the most flourishing and powerful of any.

This petition, like the many others that had been repeatedly presented in favour of America, availed it nothing. Ministry seemed, on the contrary, daily to become further persuaded that more restrictions were necessary.

Another bill, as recommended by the Lords, was brought accordingly into the House, to restrain the commerce of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina, in the same manner as that of New England. The motives alleged were the accession of those Colonies to the resolutions adopted by New England, respecting the British trade and manufactures. This bill was readily agreed to.

But though petitions were rejected, the petitioners were not the less solicitous in supporting them, and in authenticating the facts on which they were founded. The West India merchants and planters, in particular, seconded the petition they had lately presented, with a detail of circumstances relating to the British islands in that part of the world, that was equally copious and important. This business was

by the death of the Marquis of Rockingham on the first of July. This event occasioned a variety of resignations and new arrangements. Lord Shelburne succeeded him at the Treasury Board, Lord Grantham and Mr. Thomas Townshend were appointed Secretaries of State, and Mr. William Pitt was raised to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer.

Much variance and altercation arose in both Houses of Parliament in consequence of these appointments. Mr. Fox was heavily censured for having withdrawn himself from the service of the public, at a time when his abilities might have been so useful. It was insinuated that private pique had influenced his conduct, and that he had retired from Administration on account of its not submitting to his directions.

His answer to these charges was, that it did not become a man of integrity to remain in place with those of whom he disapproved the measures. He was precisely in that situation. He was not the only person, however, who differed from those who still retained their places. Those who had seceded with him, were men of unimpeachable character, as well as unquestionable abilities. His ambition was to merit the approbation of the public; this was the highest summit of his wishes; but sooner than coincide with opinions which he condemned, he would relinquish any post, however it might exalt him in the eyes of the multitude. He asserted, that before the demise of Lord Rockingham, he had openly signified his determination of resigning, if he could not prevail on the Cabinet to follow certain measures which he deemed indispensable in the present juncture. These measures being refused, and others adopted, which, in his judgment, were incompatible with the true interest of the public, he considered himself as bound by

all the rules of honour, and the principles he professed, and had so zealously recommended upon former occasions, to decline acting any longer with men, whose maxims and measures he could not bring himself to approve.

In the House of Lords, the Earl of Shelburne defended with great ability the system he had adopted, as well as the arrangements that had lately been taken. He strongly expressed himself firmly attached to the principles on which that ministry had been formed, at the head of which Lord Rockingham had presided. But he could not yield himself implicitly to the guidance of any man.—He had been taught by the great Lord Chatham, that no faction ought to be suffered to rule in this country: much less ought any individual to be permitted to dictate.

These unhappy variances among those who were considered as the most popular persons in the kingdom, rendered the death of the Marquis of Rockingham an object of great lamentation to the majority of people. His personal character, and the extensive influence he possessed, gave him a weight which kept on a due poise the jars and bickerings of the party of which he was the leader. Deprived of the chief who held them together, it was not surprising that they should become disunited, and differ about those questions which his authority, and the deference that was paid to his opinions had alone been able to decide.

These differences happening on the close of the session, presaged in the minds of many, a material alteration in the measures that would be uppermost in that which would ensue next winter. The leisure that would be afforded by the length of the recess, would, in their apprehension, be productive of opportunities to work a change in the disposition of men, and overset those resolutions and designs which they had begun to unfold.

C H A P. LXV.

Loss of Minorca—Statia—and St. Christopher.—Victory obtained by Admiral Rodney over the French Fleet in the West-Indies.

1782.

THE sieges of Gibraltar and Minorca were still carried on by the united forces of the House of Bourbon, with the utmost spirit and activity, and both places defended with unabated firmness and obstinacy by their respective garrisons. But Minorca was evidently in the greatest danger, from the facility with which the enemy could provide reinforcements and supplies, and the difficulty of conveying any relief to the besieged.

The Courts of Versailles and Madrid, however they might consider the reduction of Gibraltar as dubious, entertained no doubt of being able to reduce Minorca. In order to justify the expectation of both the French and Spanish nations, every possible measure was taken to give success to this enterprise. The army that besieged the place was little short of twenty thousand men, and consisted of chosen troops. The battering train was prodigious, amounting to near one hundred and twenty cannon, and forty mortar pieces of the largest dimensions. The most expert engineers in France conducted the attacks, and one of their best and bravest Generals commanded their army.

The garrison amounted, on the other hand, to no more than two thousand seven hundred men; five hundred of these had been drafted from the corps of invalids in England, and sent to this island seven years before.

The strength of the works they had to defend was remarkable. The approaches to the fortres were every where undermined, and the constructions to cover them within were bomb-proof. But all these were so spacious, and in such number, that twice the garrison they now contained would not have sufficed to man them.

The commencement of the siege was marked by an incident highly honourable to General Murray, the Governor. Impatient to have possession of this important fortres, the Court of Spain endeavoured, through the offer of an immense bribe, to corrupt that officer's fidelity. The answer he returned to the Duke of Crillon, who had been commissioned to make this trial, was striking. He gave him to understand, that when the most illustrious of his ancestors had been tempted by his sovereign to assassinate his refractory and rebellious subject, the Duke of Guise, he nobly disdained such an office; and that he himself should, after this precedent, have refused to attempt the seduction of a man of honour.

From the landing of the enemy in August, to the beginning of November, no material event took place; the fire, though spirited on both sides, doing no considerable damage, and the besiegers being chiefly occupied in constructing their heavier batteries, and preparing to make their closer approaches. About this time a sally was made on the Duke of Crillon's head-quarters, with so much vigour, and was so judiciously conducted, that he was compelled to abandon them, with the loss of a number of prisoners. The whole army of the besiegers was brought forward on this occasion to dislodge the British troops; but their disposition and countenance were such, that the Duke did not think proper to attack them; and they had the honour of

main-

maintaining the post they had seized during a whole day, and of retiring unmolested.

The batteries of cannon erected by the enemy, tho' served with great courage and expertness, had not hitherto done any essential execution. They had now lain upwards of three months before the place; and it was expected, both in France and Spain, that they would have mastered it before this time, with so many advantages on their side. It was not, however, sooner than this period that they had perfected their batteries of mortar-pieces, and began to open them.

The fire of the besieged had during this time been kept up with a vivacity, which had much retarded the works of the enemy. As soon as their bomb-batteries were constructed, the garrison directed their efforts chiefly to the destruction of these. Their shells frequently fell upon the enemy's magazines of gunpowder, and blew them up with a considerable destruction of their people; nor did their shipping escape, several of their vessels being sunk, or set on fire, by the cannon or bombs from the garrison.

But notwithstanding the resolution and skill displayed by the besieged, the superiority they had to contend with, in respect to artillery and numbers, was so great, that they alone were sufficient to put their fortitude to the utmost trial.

It has, however, by adequate and impartial judges been asserted, that had no other causes intervened, the siege of Minorca would have terminated as gloriously as that of Gibraltar, and the enemy been obliged to relinquish the attempt.

But while the French and Spanish army were investing it from without, a far more dreadful and dangerous enemy had taken possession of the place within, and committed such ravages among the

besieged, as were much more destructive than those they suffered from the exertions of the enemy.

The communication with the country being entirely cut off, no supplies of vegetables could be conveyed to the garrison. They were reduced to the necessity of subsisting on salt provisions. Tho' they were furnished with these, and with all such necessaries as admit of preservation, in the greatest abundance, the want of vegetable food was an evil that proved without a remedy.

Most of the troops that composed the garrison, having been long stationed in the island, had accustomed themselves to a constant and regular use of vegetable diet. The sudden deprivation of a species of food, to which they were become habituated, proved such a stroke to their constitutions, as they were unable to stand. Among other complaints, it produced that most terrible and fatal one to men confined in ships and garrisons, the scurvy. It increased in a short time to such a deplorable degree, as to baffle all endeavours to suppress or alleviate its effects. They were so powerful and rapid, that every day diminished the strength of the garrison, by the numbers that either fell victims to this severe malady, or were disabled by it from doing duty. What contributed greatly to its progress, was the inclosed and narrow space to which they were confined, and the necessity to which they were compelled of living in the casemates, and places under ground, in order to shelter themselves from the dreadful and incessant showers of shot and shells, that fell day and night upon every part of the fortress.

This continual fire, under the direction of a numerous and expert body of engineers, could not fail to make an effectual impression on a spot of so limited an extent. The upper works suffered considerably, and numbers of guns were dismounted; but

But the resolution of the besieged would have surmounted all these difficulties, had not the terrible calamity that raged within their walls rendered them insuperable.

In the midst of this severe trial, their constancy and perseverance were invincible. Such was the zeal they felt for the honour of the British name, to use their own expression, that many of the common soldiers, though on the point of death, concealed their condition from their officers, in order to have the consolation, as they said, of expiring upon duty with their arms in their hands.

The state of the garrison was, in the commencement of February eighty-two, so enfeebled, that the whole number able to do duty, amounted to no more than six hundred and sixty ; and of these, scarcely a hundred were untainted with the scurvy. From the concurrent testimony of the physicians and surgeons it appeared, that, in a very few days, there might not probably be left a single soldier in a condition to bear arms.

In the mean time, the necessary guards required four hundred and fifteen men. Hence it was evident, that as they could not be regularly relieved, illness and fatigue would speedily overcome them. In this extremity Governor Murray proposed terms of capitulation, by which the garrison might be permitted to preserve their liberty on surrendering the place : But the Duke of Crillon informed him, that his orders were to listen to no capitulation, but under the express condition, that the garrison should remain prisoners of war.

To soften however the rigour of his instructions, he allowed them to return to England, on General Murray's engaging, that they should not serve again during the war, till regularly exchanged.

Every other concession was granted that could be required or expected. To the honour of the

French commander, he seemed to feel a peculiar satisfaction, in expressing the highest sense of respect for the Governor, and the troops under his command.

In the first article of the capitulation General Murray demanded, that as the garrison must surrender prisoners, they should be allowed all the honours of war. This, it was added, was not contrary to his instructions, and would tend to his glory, as certainly no troops ever gave greater proofs of heroism, having defended themselves almost to the last man.

The Duke's answer testified the readiest and most generous assent to the General's assertion; and expressly specified, "that, in consideration of the constancy and valour, which he and his men had shewn in their brave defence, they should receive all the military honours consistent with their situation."

On the fifth of February the fortress of St. Philip was delivered up to the combined forces of France and Spain. Perhaps, says General Murray, in his letter upon this occasion, a more noble nor tragical scene was seldom exhibited, than the march of its garrison through the French and Spanish armies. It consisted of no more than six hundred old decrepid soldiers, two hundred seamen, one hundred and twenty of the Royal Artillery, and about fifty Corsicans, Greeks, and others. The two armies were drawn up fronting each other, and formed a lane for the garrison to pass through, reaching from St. Philip's to George-Town. Here the garrison laid down their arms, declaring they had surrendered them to God alone, and that the conquerors could only boast they had taken an hospital.

Such was the distressful figure of the British troops, that many of the French and Spaniards, it

it was said, shed tears as they passed them. The humanity of the Duke of Crillon, and of his officers, was highly conspicuous on this occasion. No kind of relief was left unsought for the assistance of the sickly remains of the garrison. Every possible care and attention was paid to them; and they were treated with every mark of respect and sympathy, which could be expected from a generous conqueror.

Thus did the island of Minorca return to the dominion of Spain, after it had been in the possession of Great Britain, since the year seventeen hundred and eight, when it was taken by Sir John Leake and General (afterwards Earl) Stanhope, and had, together with Gibraltar, been considered as one of the noblest trophies, and most valuable acquisitions to Britain, during the triumphant reign of Queen Anne.

The loss of Minorca in Europe, was accompanied by events of the like nature in other parts, that marked the close of the year eighty-one, and the beginning of eighty-two, as a period highly unpropitious to Britain.

The success which the French had met with, during the preceding summer, in reducing Tobago, induced them to cast their eyes on the other British islands in the Indian seas, with a view of attacking them at a convenient opportunity. They seemed, however, too well guarded at the time to afford them any hope of succeeding. The only one upon which, after much consultation, they ventured to make an attempt, was that of Statia, which had been taken from the Dutch at the commencement of the year, and of which they were informed the garrison thought itself in a state of perfect security from any enemy, on account of the difficulty of its access.

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The Marquis de Bouille, upon receiving this information, determined to improve the opportunity it offered of reducing that island by surprise. He sailed from Martinico at the head of two thousand men, and arrived in the night of the twenty-sixth of November, off a landing place at Statia, which was so dangerous, that being looked upon as impracticable, it had been neglected and left without a guard. Here, with much toil and exertion, and with the loss of many boats and people, he found means to set ashore about four or five hundred of his men: But even this effort took up the whole of the night; and the appearance of day put a stop to his landing any more. He now saw himself obliged to take an immediate decision, either to surrender to the garrison, or to hazard the attacking it, though almost double his numbers. No other choice remained, as all means of retreat were cut off. He took the last, and marched with all diligence, in order to surprise the garrison, before they should receive any intelligence of an enemy being ashore.

The place where he landed was six miles distant from the town and fort; and, in the line of his march, he had a narrow defile to pass; which, if a few men could have occupied, his whole scheme would at once have been frustrated. But his good fortune served him so effectually, that this important pass was unguarded. He arrived in time to secure it, and instantly pushed forward with all imaginable speed.

A body of Irish troops, in the service of France, were the principal actors on this occasion. They were commanded by Count Dillon, who used such diligence, that he arrived at the town before six in the morning. A party belonging to the garrison was at this time exercising on the parade. Mistaking the Irish, from the similitude of their uni-

form, for their own people, they suffered them to approach so near, that the mistake was not discovered till a close discharge had been made by the enemy, which killed and wounded many.

The suddenness of the surprise throwing them immediately into disorder, they were totally disabled from making any resistance. Colonel Cockburn, commanding officer of the garrison, happening at that instant to come upon the parade, was made prisoner. Numbers of the garrison hastened in the mean while to the fort, in hope of making an effectual stand there against the enemy. But the French had already taken possession of the gate, and prevented the draw-bridge from being raised.— They entered the fort, which being surrendered to them by those who had taken shelter in it, the remainder of the garrison, which was dispersed in various places, when apprized of this, imagined the enemy's strength to be very considerable, and too great to be resisted. In this persuasion, they submitted without further opposition.

The manner in which the island of Statia was retaken, though it reflected no disgrace on the valour of the British troops, could not fail to cast a shade on that military vigilance and circumspection which had hitherto characterised them. Their final deficiency in these essential requisites in war, upon this occasion, exposed them to universal and well merited censure.

It was with peculiar satisfaction the Marquis of Bouille took this opportunity of signalising his disinterestedness in pecuniary matters. Among the spoils that fell into his hands, a large sum of money was claimed by the British commanding officer, as being his private property : this was generously restored to him by the Marquis ; who caused, in the same manner, whatever had belonged to Dutch individuals, to be reserved, in order to be returned to them,

them, and suffered nothing to be seized but the produce arising from the sale of the prizes that had been taken by the English when they captured the island.

The opening of the ensuing year was no less unfavourable to the English on the continent of South America : where the settlements of Demerary and Illequibo, of which they had deprived the Dutch in the beginning of the preceding year, were now retaken by the French.

But these successes of its ancient enemy, though sufficiently mortifying to the British nation, were quickly followed by an attempt of much more importance. The enterprising disposition of the Marquis de Bouille, had long turned his views to the subjugation of the rich island of St. Christopher, once the joint possession of both the French and English, till the victorious arms of the latter expelled the former at the commencement of this present century.

Exclusive of the value of this fertile isle, other motives offered themselves to the Marquis. He knew that numbers of the inhabitants were highly dissatisfied at the seizure of their property on the taking of Statia from the Dutch. He was also well acquainted with their disapprobation of the general conduct of the British government, and that many of them did not scruple to express the most bitter resentment on these various accounts.

Expecting justly to meet with little resistance from a discontented people, he formed the project of attacking this island, while the causes of their complaints were still fresh in their remembrance.—Nor was it otherwise in a condition for a vigorous defence. The garrison consisted of no more than six hundred effective regulars ; while the force that was destined to attack it amounted to eight thousand excellent troops, and the fleet to accompany them,

them, and cover the siege, was composed of thirty-two ships of the line, commanded by Count de Grasse, whom his valour and good fortune in North America, during the preceding campaign, had now rendered a very formidable enemy.

The only place of strength in the island was Brimstone Hill, situated on the shore, near the town of Sandy Point, which it over-looks and commands. Some fortifications had been lately constructed on the summit of that hill; but its natural strength was its best security, being of great height, and of so difficult an access, from its steepness, and the ruggedness of the paths leading to it, that an ascent was almost impracticable against a very moderate force to defend it.

On the landing of the French army, which from the greatness of its force could not be prevented, nor even opposed with safety, General Frazer, the commanding officer, retired to Brimstone Hill.—The whole of his strength, besides the regulars above-mentioned, did not exceed four hundred militia, brought to his assistance by Governor Shirley. But twice the number that composed the garrison would have hardly sufficed for a proper defence.

The French having made good their landing at Basseterre, the principal town in the island, advanced immediately to Brimstone Hill, which they closely invested on every side. The ill fortune of the besieged was instanced upon this occasion in a most remarkable manner. Eight brass twenty-four pounders, with six thousand balls of corresponding weight, and two large brass mortars, with fifteen hundred shells, had been carried to the bottom of the hill, with an intent to convey them to the summit: but through some cause that never came to light, they were left in that situation. When the enemy were landed, it was too late to secure them, and they fell into the hands of the French, who without

without this unexpected supply, would have been greatly retarded in their operations. One of their storeships, loaded with the principal materials for a siege, had been wrecked on the rocks near the shore, and another of equal consequence, had been captured by the squadron under Admiral Hood.

This vigilant and enterprising officer lay at this time at Barbadoes, against which the French first intended to direct their motions, but had been prevented by contrary winds. The moment he was apprized of their design upon St. Christopher, he hastened to Antigua, where taking on board all the troops that could be spared, he steered directly for Basseterre, where the French fleet was at anchor, with a determination to attack it, though it consisted of thirty-two ships of the line, and his own only of twenty-two: but the confidence he reposed in the capacity and courage of his officers and men, made him overlook all disadvantages.

Arriving off Nevis on the morning of the twenty-fourth of January, he ordered the line of battle to be formed; but was prevented from the prosecution of his intent, by the damage two of his capital ships received in running foul upon each other.—This accident afforded time to Count de Grasse to put to sea, and make his preparations for an engagement.

On the twenty-fifth, at day-break, both fleets being in sight, Admiral Hood, in order to compass the point he had in view, which was to get between the enemy and the island, still preserved the appearance of an attack upon the French, to the end of drawing them further out to sea. The stratagem succeeded; and as soon as the British Admiral had a fair prospect of gaining the anchorage left by the enemy, he pushed for it with all diligence, and took possession of it. This was undoubtedly, in

in the Admiral's own words, the only chance he had of saving the island, if it could be saved.

Count de Grasse, on perceiving his intent, endeavoured to prevent him, by cutting off his rear: but Commodore Affleck, assisted by his two seconds, Captain Cornwallis, and Lord Robert Manners, received him with so vigorous a fire, that his attempt was totally frustrated, with great loss of men on his side, and very little damage on the other.

Next day the French fleet renewed its attack on the British from van to rear, with its whole force. The conflict lasted two hours, and was maintained with great spirit by the enemy; but they could not make any impression. After sheering off, they returned in the afternoon, and made a second attempt, but as ineffectual as the first.

In consequence of these two repulses, the enemy kept aloof, and left the British squadron in quiet possession of the position it had taken. Their loss in these two engagements was very considerable.— The number of slain must have been great, as no less than a thousand of their wounded were sent ashore to Statia. Many of their ships were much damaged; the Ville de Paris, Count de Grasse's own ship, had upwards of eighty shot holes, and lay during the next day on the heel, employed in repairing them.

The conduct of Admiral Hood throughout this remarkable transaction, was considered by the ablest judges in these matters, as one of the greatest professional exertions that had happened during the whole war. It struck the enemy with the highest admiration of his abilities, and with no little apprehensions of them: it served to confirm the impartial world in the opinion it had formed, that the naval genius of Britain would render her an overmatch for all her enemies.

In the mean time, the French were carrying on their operations against Brimstone Hill with great courage

courage and activity. They erected a number of batteries of heavy cannon and mortars on every spot of ground from whence it could be annoyed.— They had established their head-quarters at the town of Sandy Point, but it was soon reduced to ashes by the fire of the besieged.

The fatigue undergone by the French was excessive, from the heat of the climate, and the necessity they were under of dragging their heavy artillery to the eminences on which it was to be placed. They were exposed to an incessant fire from the garrison, who incommodeed them severely in all their approaches, and did such execution among them, that they dearly purchased every inch of ground they were able to gain.

In order to obtain information of the situation and circumstances of the garrison at Brimstone Hill, two officers, the one belonging to the navy, the other to the army, both of them resolute and intelligent men, were dispatched on shore, and found means through many difficulties to execute their commission. The message they brought back from General Frazer, was in the stile of the old warriors in the days of the Edwards and Henrys : General Prescot had sent him word of his arrival with succours ; to which the blunt and gallant veteran replied, that as he had taken the trouble to come with troops to his assistance, he should, doubtless, be glad to see him, but that he was in no want of him or them.

This spirited message induced the British commanders to land a body of troops ; in order, if practicable, to seize on some post that might enable them to impede the enemy's operations. An engagement ensued as soon as they were put ashore, wherein they had the advantage. Next day the Marquis de Bouille advanced upon them, at the head of four thousand men ; but found General Prescot

Prescot so advantageously posted, that he retired without attacking him, and contented himself with making such arrangements as were necessary to secure his own troops from being molested in their operations against the garrison.

As the vast superiority of the enemy rendered an attempt upon them impracticable, the detachment on shore was withdrawn. Still, however, the garrison continued its defence with unabated resolution; in hope, that as soon as sufficient reinforcements arrived, they would immediately proceed to their assistance. In this view they supported the hardships and continual toil that were daily increasing, with singular perseverance and fortitude.

The French had by this time surrounded them, in a manner, with batteries of cannon and mortars, from which they plied them day and night with an incessant shower of shot and shells. This terrible operation continued three weeks; during which all the constructions of every kind upon the hill were entirely destroyed, and the garrison deprived of all shelter.

On the eighth of February, they made their distress known to the British commanders on board the fleet, by means of the signals agreed upon. The utmost endeavours were in consequence used, to inform them, that if they could possibly hold out ten days longer, it was highly probable the island would be saved; as the motions of the French Admiral, and proceedings on shore of the Marquis de Bouille, indicated a despair of success, and an intention to relinquish the enterprize.

The various efforts that were made to convey this intelligence to the besieged all miscarried, to the great mortification of Admiral Hood, who left no expedient untried that could be devised, to accomplish a purpose he had so much at heart, and from whence so much was expected.

The siege had now lasted five weeks. Harassed by unceasing fatigue, the remains of the garrison were unable to withstand any longer the intolerable duty that was now imposed upon them of being under arms both day and night. Their number was so reduced, that it would have been impossible to resist an assault; and this was hourly looked for, from the total demolition of the works in most places, and almost all the guns being either dismounted or disabled.

In this extremity it was thought necessary to capitulate. The generosity the Marquis de Bouille had displayed upon similar occasions, was a sufficient inducement to afford the garrison ample expectation of being treated with all manner of indulgence. But he was prompted by additional motives to grant them every request they could make, in order to secure as soon as possible the possession of the island. The arrival of Admiral Rodney was daily expected, together with such a naval reinforcement as would place the British fleet upon a full equality at least, if not a superiority to the French.

From these considerations, the terms of the capitulation were favourable in the highest degree.—They were the same in regard to the inhabitants, as those granted to the island of Dominico; and the garrison, besides the honours of war, was permitted to return to England, on condition of not serving against France or its allies till exchanged.

The Marquis de Bouille, with a magnanimity that added new lustre to his character, complimented Governor Shirley and General Frazer with their personal liberty. His expressions in that article of the capitulation which specified this favour, did equal honour both to him and those gentlemen.

“Out of respect,” he said, “to the courage and determined conduct of Generals Shirley and Frazer,

Frazer, it is agreed that they shall not be considered as prisoners of war: the former may return to his government of Antigua, and the latter may continue in the service of his country; being happy to testify this mark of particular esteem for those two brave officers."

The reduction of St. Christopher took place on the thirteenth day of February, in the year eighty-two.

On the next day the French fleet anchoring off the island of Nevis, Admiral Hood judged it advisable to leave the road of Basseterre, in order to preserve his ships in a fit condition for service, on the junction of Admiral Rodney, of which he was now in daily expectation. The present superiority of Count de Grasse rendered all further naval enterprizes imprudent, until the arrival of the reinforcement under that commander.

In order to dislodge the British squadron, the French, as soon as they were in possession of St. Christopher, began to erect batteries of guns and mortars on a height that commanded the road. The consideration of the impossibility of resisting the united attack that was preparing against him, both by land and sea, together with the want of water and refreshments, hastened his departure to Barbadoes, where he determined to station his squadron, and watch the motions of the enemy.

The French did not, however, obtain the success they had met with at St. Christopher without a considerable loss of men. Exclusive of those who fell in the engagements with the British squadron, above a thousand were slain in the siege of Brimstone Hill, besides the much greater numbers that were wounded, and whose recovery in a climate so inimical to European constitutions as the West Indies have constantly proved, was, of course, very

doubtful, and required uncommon care, as well as length of time.

The fortune of the French seemed at this period to be settled on so firm a foundation in this part of the world, that no accidents were apprehended by them of a nature to effect an alteration to their disadvantage. Their islands were full of as excellent troops as France had been able to furnish for the expeditions it had projected against the British settlements in the West Indies. The exertions of Spain to the same intent were also very formidable. Never in this quarter of the globe had the strength of those two potent monarchies been so conspicuously displayed. Their naval list was computed at more than threescore ships of the line. These were attended with a prodigious multitude of frigates and armed vessels.—With this immense force, they entertained no doubt of being able to make an entire conquest of the British possessions in that hemisphere.

In the mean time, the British ministry, fully sensible of the danger to which they were exposed, was preparing a strong squadron for their relief. It consisted of fifteen capital ships, and was commanded by Sir George Rodney. It arrived at Barbadoes on the nineteenth of February, where he formed the long desired junction with Sir Samuel Hood. The British fleet now consisting of thirty-seven sail of the line; both Admirals determined to put to sea, and intercept the convoy of provisions, stores, and ammunition, that was on its way from Brest to Martinico, for the supply of Count de Grasse's fleet. But notwithstanding the judiciousness of their dispositions, the convoy had the address to elude them, by dropping to leeward of the British fleet during the night, and sailing round Guadaloupe; from whence keeping close with the land of Dominico, it arrived safe in the bay of Port Royal.

In consequence of this disappointment Admiral Rodney repaired to St. Lucia, where he took in provisions for five or six months, with a determination to follow the French fleet the moment it sailed out of Martinico, wherever it should direct its course. In this view, a number of frigates were stationed off that island, to give notice of its departure.

The design of the French Admiral was to proceed with all diligence to Hispaniola, where Don Solano was waiting for him with sixteen ships of the line, and a numerous body of land forces. These, added to the French fleet and troops, were to have formed a joint attack upon the island of Jamaica. With this object before him, he made it his utmost care to avoid an engagement with the English, till he had joined the Spanish fleet, when, from the superiority he should then possess, he would be under no apprehensions of meeting with any effectual obstruction to the projects he was commissioned to execute.

The great importance of preventing this junction, and of forcing him to an engagement before it took place, was obvious to the British Admiral. Until this had been effected, the islands yet belonging to Britain could not look upon their condition as secure.

To the great satisfaction of the British commanders, they were informed early in the morning of the eighth of April, by the signals made from the frigates of observation, that the French fleet was getting under way, and steering to leeward. Admiral Rodney stood immediately after the enemy, and came up with them off Dominica towards the evening. A calm prevented any motion in either fleet till the next day, when the enemy, favoured by a breeze, made for Guadaloupe. The van of the British fleet receiving the wind soon after, fol-

lowed them with all diligence, and fetched them near enough to engage. Count de Grasse eagerly seized the opportunity of attacking this division of the British fleet, while so far separated from the rest; but Sir Samuel Hood, who commanded it, withstood him with a firmness and order which the enemy, tho' he bore down upon him with his whole strength, could not discompose. He had at one time no less than seven ships upon him. It was noon before there was a sufficiency of wind to carry part of the British center to the support of the van.

Out of thirty-six ships, of which the British fleet consisted on this occasion, only twenty could come into action: but such was the skill and gallantry with which they maintained so unequal a conflict, that notwithstanding Count de Grasse's whole fleet, consisting of thirty-four sail of the line, lay upon them, the damages it received were far greater than those it occasioned. The principal loss was that of Captain Bayne of the Alfred, an officer of great merit.

The British rear edging up at length to the center, the French Admiral drew his ships out of action, and continued to keep at such a distance, as defeated all endeavours to near him.

The tenth and eleventh were spent in preventing the enemy from weathering Guadaloupe. Towards the evening of this day some of the headmost ships of the British fleet approached so near to one of the enemy's, that had suffered considerably in the late action, that it must have been taken, had not Count de Grasse bore down with his whole fleet for its preservation. The movement he made for this purpose brought him so near to the British fleet, that Admiral Rodney conceived immediate hope of being able to force him to action the next day. With this intent he made such dispositions during the night, that it was

was plain, at break of day, that it was no longer in the enemy's power to avoid an engagement.

Not one moment was lost in putting into execution the long determined method of engaging the enemy. The signal for close battle was thrown out, and obeyed with universal readiness by every ship in the fleet. The action commenced about seven in the morning, by Admiral Drake's division. Ranging up as near as possible to the enemy, not a gun was fired from the British fleet, till it had approached them sufficiently for every shot to do execution; When such a fire began, and lasted throughout the whole fight, as the oldest seamen in both fleets confessed they had never witnessed before. The Formidable, Admiral Rodney's ship, discharged in the course of this terrible conflict near eighty broadsides.

The force, destined for the expedition against Jamaica, was distributed on board the French fleet. Hence their ships were so crowded, that the slaughter among them was prodigious. This force was little short of six thousand men, and the loss it sustained on this day, almost ruined it as entirely, as if it had been completely defeated at land.

The battle was fought on both sides with a spirit and determination, worthy of the character of two brave and rival nations, who seemed, on this occasion, to use Admiral Rodney's expression, to look upon the honour of their country as essentially concerned in the event of this day.

The fight had continued with equal resolution, and without any apparent superiority of success, till between twelve and one, when Admiral Rodney, perceiving an opportunity of breaking asunder the enemy's line of battle, resolved to improve it to the utmost of his power. In his own ship of ninety guns, seconded by two others of the same rate, and one of seventy-four, he bore down upon their cen-

ter, and penetrated through it. He was followed by the remainder of his division, and wearing round close upon the enemy, effectually separated their fleets.

To increase the disorder into which they were thrown by this bold and unexpected motion, Admiral Drake in the van, was directed by signal to tack, and gain the wind of the enemy. This being effected with great expertness and celerity, the confusion became general throughout the French fleet. The van endeavoured to re-establish the line, but with no success; and their rear was so entirely routed, that no hope remained of recovering its order. The rear division, commanded by Admiral Hood, coming up on this juncture, completed the enemy's defeat, and rendered it irretrievable.

In this desperate situation the behaviour of the French Admiral was firm and intrepid in the highest degree. With his own and the other ships in the center, he withstood till evening all the efforts of the various ships that attacked him. Captain Cornwallis, in the Canada of seventy-four guns, signalized himself in a particular manner, by the bravery with which he engaged him during the space of two hours; but Count de Grasse continued his resistance with as much obstinacy, as if the success of the day had still remained doubtful.

He persisted in this manner, facing with the most admirable undauntedness the repeated attempts that were made upon him, from every quarter, till past six o'clock in the afternoon. Admiral Hood's approach did not alter his determination: He bore a heavy fire from him during some time, without any appearance of yielding; and it was not till after a dreadful destruction of his people, that he consented at last to strike. He and two more were the only men left standing upon the upper deck.

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He was not the only man however who behaved in this resolute manner. Several French captains displayed an intrepidity in the defence of their respective ships, after the rout had commenced, which did them the more honour, as from the success gained by the English, these were now enabled to attack them with great advantages. The Captain of the Glorieux did not yield till all his masts were shot away, and his vessel was unable to make any defence. The Captain of the Cæsar, after his ship had been battered to pieces, and his ensign-staff shot away, ordered his colours to be nailed to the mast, inflexibly resolved never to strike. He continued fighting accordingly till he was slain. When his ship surrendered, it was almost a wreck. Other French officers acted in the same manner.

The courage exhibited on the other hand by the British officers, was such, that it was difficult to tell who deserved the highest praise. Exclusive of the commanders, to whose valour and skill must be chiefly ascribed the success of the day, Captains Cornwallis and Inglefield distinguished themselves; the first by taking the Hector, a ship of the same force as his own, and contributing greatly to the capture of Count de Grasse's ship; the second by engaging and utterly disabling the Cæsar, a vessel of equal strength to that which he commanded.

Never did France, since the famous battle at La Hogue, in the year sixteen hundred and ninety-two, sustain so compleat and ruinous a defeat as on this memorable day. Their fleet, according to the accounts that afterwards transpired, was by their own confession almost ruined; and their loss in men amounted to an absolute carnage. The number of those who were actually slain in this engagement, and that of the ninth, was computed at three thousand, and the wounded at near double that proportion. What rendered this computation not improbable

bable was, that upwards of four hundred men were killed on board the Ville de Paris, and that in several French ships singly, between two and three hundred were outright slain.

This destruction among the French was the more astonishing, as in the British fleet the loss did not exceed eleven hundred in killed and wounded. The officers of distinction who fell, were Capt. Blair of the Anson, and Lord Robert Manners of the Resolution, both of them officers of the highest desert. The latter was the son to the late illustrious Marquis of Granby.

It was the general observation of the world, that the British seamen made good upon this occasion their boast, that whenever they should bring the enemy to close fight, the day would be their own. The perseverance and obstinacy with which they stood to their guns, and the alacrity and confidence of victory they exhibited, from the moment they found themselves in close action, were a matter of astonishment, as well as of animation, even to their own officers.

This important victory was the more conspicuous, as upon a candid examination of the circumstances of the fight, it appears, that the real superiority in number of ships during the action was on the side of the French. Their fleet, according to their own account, consisted of thirty-four ships of the line. The British exceeded it only by two; but six ships of its rear division were prevented from coming up through want of wind.

The loss of shipping on the part of the enemy, amounted to five taken; three of seventy-four guns, of which the complement was nine hundred men each, and one of sixty-four and seven hundred and fifty. Another of their line was reported to be sunk. But that ship, of which the loss struck the French with the deepest concern, was the Ville de Paris,

Paris, so called from the city of Paris having built it at its own expence, and made a present of it to the late King. It had cost four millions of French livres, and was esteemed the most magnificent ship in France. It carried one hundred and ten guns, and had on board at its departure from Martinico, thirteen hundred men, including marines and land soldiers.

It ought not to pass unnoticed, that the French fleet was under the command of three of the bravest and most esteemed officers in France; the Count de Grasse, M. de Vaudreuil, and M. de Bougainville, whose naval abilities, as well as personal valour, were universally acknowledged.

This was a truly unfortunate day to Count de Grasse. He lost at once by this defeat all the benefits resulting from his late successes. He had by his dexterous management provided for the safety of a large convoy that sailed with him from Martinico, of which the destination was to the French ports in Hispaniola, and the preservation of which was of immense consequence at the present juncture. He had so far disappointed the endeavours to come up with his fleet, and was so much out of reach, that the British commanders almost despaired of being able to overtake him. In these circumstances he might have held on his course unmolested to Cape Francois, the place appointed for the junction of the French and Spanish armaments. Here arrived, he would have been at full liberty to enter on the execution of those designs with which he was entrusted, and would at the same time have been in the command of such a strength as would have set him above all danger. Had the whole British naval power in the West Indies been collected for the purpose of opposing him, he still would have retained a superiority sufficient to have carried

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on the attempts he had in view, and which it would have been highly difficult to prevent him from prosecuting.

All these important objects were given up in a fatal hour. For the sake of saving a crippled ship, he exposed himself to a reverse of fortune, which, had it not befallen him, he still would have justly deserved; thus losing by one wrong step, all the advantages he had gained, and the still greater of which he had the prospect and probability.

Such were the complaints and censures to which his ill fortune subjected the Count de Grasse among his countrymen. He exculpated himself on the other hand, by alledging, that the fleet under his command was fully a match for that under Admiral Rodney; especially considering the damages it had sustained in its engagement with him on the ninth, three days only previous to that he was now blamed for having hazarded. Under such circumstances, it would have been a disgrace to France to have lost a ship of the line, without attempting to protect it against the enemy.

In the opinion of reasonable people, the French Admiral was fully acquitted of the foregoing charges. His conduct throughout the whole of this transaction was justifiable in every respect. His dispositions were proper and judicious, and his behaviour in the day of battle did him the highest credit. He might be accounted unfortunate, but by no means faulty.

The flying enemy were closely pursued by Commodore Affleck, and the ships in company with him. He kept up a vigorous fire upon them, and continued the chase till dark. On the morning of the next day they were entirely out of sight. They had fled in a variety of directions, in order the better to elude and escape pursuit. Some took their course even so far to leeward as the Dutch island of Curaçoa.

Curassoa, bordering on the Spanish coast of South America. The greater number collecting themselves into a squadron of twenty-three or four sail of the line, made the best of their way to Cape Francois.

This was all that remained in a body of the formidable fleet that had lately occasioned so much terror in the British islands. It is highly probable that if night had not interposed, hardly any would have been able to effect an escape.

As soon as it was light, Admiral Rodney prepared for the immediate pursuit of the enemy, but was prevented by a calm, which lasted three days. A number of frigates and light vessels were dispatched in the mean time to explore the harbours in the neighbouring French islands: when it being ascertained that the enemy had sailed to leeward, Sir Samuel Hood's division was dispatched in quest of them. He used so much diligence, that on the next day after leaving the fleet, he discovered five of their ships making towards the Mona Passage, between the East end of Hispaniola and the island of Porto Rico. The Valiant, of seventy-four guns, Capt. Goodall, being a great way a-head of the division, which was becalmed, availed himself of a favourable breeze to cross over the long and dangerous shoals of Cape Roxo in pursuit of them.— Coming up with two ships of the line, within three or four miles of the land, and fearing their companies might attempt to run ashore and burn them, he resolved to attack them without delay.— After little more than an hour's action, he carried both, with an inconsiderable loss on his side. But they suffered exceedingly in their masts and rigging, and their killed and wounded exceeded one hundred.

The capture of these two ships, both of which carried sixty-four guns, and six hundred men, did signal

signal honour to Capt. Goodall, whose gallantry and good conduct were equally displayed in this daring action. Of the other three vessels, which were frigates, only one escaped the ships that pursued them.

After the performance of this important service, Admiral Hood's division rejoined the fleet off Cape Tiberoon; where he was left with twenty-five ships of the line to watch the motions of the combined forces of the enemy, who were assembling at Cape Francois in great numbers, and collecting the remains of their shattered fleet. Notwithstanding their late defeat, their strength was yet very formidable; it consisted of twenty-four French, and sixteen Spanish sail of the line, the latter entirely fresh from port. The troops were between ten and twelve thousand regulars, besides marines and volunteers from their islands. A strong squadron was also daily expected from France, under M. de Guichen, with a large military reinforcement. All these circumstances concurred to render the enemy, though defeated, yet very dangerous, and to make it necessary to be prepared for all events.

To this purpose, Admiral Rodney now repaired to Jamaica with all possible expedition; as well to provide for its full security, as to superintend the repair of the damages many of his ships had received in the late action. They were accordingly refitted with so much diligence, that a few days after his arrival at that island, which was towards the close of April, he was able to dispatch such a reinforcement to Admiral Hood, that the enemy did not dare to venture out of their ports, notwithstanding their superiority in number. They seemed to have lost both the spirit to attempt, and the expectation to succeed, in any enterprise against the fleets or possessions of Great Britain in the West Indies.

In this manner were frustrated the designs of France and Spain in this part of the world. The first were now bereaved of almost every means they had prepared for their prosecution. Besides the deprivation of eight of their principal ships, and the shattered condition of many of the rest, they had lost the whole train of artillery belonging to their troops, with all its appurtenances, together with thirty-six chests full of money, for the payment of the military in their intended expeditions. Thus, had they been inclined to persist in the pursuit of their undertakings, they must have chiefly depended on the resources of their Spanish allies. But these partook so deeply of the impression that had been made by the late disaster, that they did not seem in the least disposed to act with any vigour for its reparation. They shortly after returned to the Havannah, giving up all thoughts of embracing any measures, for the present, but such as were requisite for their own safety.

The news of this signal victory arriving in Europe at a time when the attention of all people was taken up with the immense preparations carrying on against Great Britain and her foreign dependencies, struck them with the greater astonishment, as they had been given to understand by the emissaries and adherents to France and Spain, that it was past all possibility for Britain to withstand the efforts that would be made against its possessions in the American seas. The enumeration of their land and naval forces that were to be employed in this part of the world, filled all their people at home, and their numerous partisans abroad, with the utmost exultation, and occasioned the most serious alarm in Britain, and among the few friends of consequence it had in Europe.

It was therefore with unspeakable surprise that the European states were apprized of an event that

that was wholly unexpected, and even considered in some measure, by many, as impossible, in the ordinary course of things. It wrought an immediate change in every court of Europe: they no longer beheld Great Britain with the same eye. It had lately been pronounced on the brink of inevitable ruin, and its fall portended as the necessary conclusion of the numberless difficulties in which it had so long been involved. But now a new language was held, and different ideas took place every where. The menacing boasts of France and Spain, and the representations of their vast strength, lost all force and credit. Experience, it was now said, fully showed, that the superiority of which they made such a parade, was much greater in appearance than in effect; and that when put to a fair trial, they were not able to encounter Great Britain. Fleets might be constructed, and people found to man them, but the valour and skill of British

seamen would still render them invincible.

Such were the opinions and discourses of the disinterested part of society. Even in those countries where the influence of France was notorious, the expectations that had been raised in her favour totally vanished; and the persuasion that had maintained its ground only among a few, that Great Britain would terminate the contest to her honour, now became current and popular every where.

It was remarked at the same time by many, that as the year eighty-one, which had begun with fair prospects on the side of Britain in North America and the West Indies, had ended greatly to its disadvantage; in the same manner, the year eighty-two, which had opened with the most flattering promises to France and its allies, had produced the most unpropitious event that had hitherto befallen the confederacy against Britain.

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This event may be said to have entirely decided the fate of the war in the West Indies, as the affair at York Town had in the preceding campaign settled the destiny of the Colonies.

C H A P. LXVI.

Transactions in the European Seas.—French and Spaniards repulsed at Gibraltar.—Lord Howe relieves it.

1782.

DURING the winter of the year eighty-one, the various powers in combination against Great Britain were busily employed in forming a variety of plans to distress it in every vulnerable part. The success of the Americans had highly raised the spirit and confidence of her numerous enemies. They projected a general union of all their naval forces, with which they made no doubt of overwhelming all resistance, and becoming absolute masters of the sea.

Their plan was, it seems, to select their best ships and seamen, and to invade the Channel in such a manner, as to deter the British home force from venturing to face them. To this intent, threescore ships of the line, composed of the largest and best constructed in France, Spain, and Holland, were to take possession of the narrow seas, while a numerous list of frigates should occupy every track frequented by the trading fleets, or vessels of this island.

Nor did their intentions rest here:—A number of troops were at the same time to have been distributed on board their Channel fleet; which, as opportunity served, were to have made descents on different parts of the neighbouring coast; and even, if they saw any prospect of succeeding, to have made attempts of the most serious nature.

In the midst of this perilous situation, the British ministry prepared with its usual vigilance and deter-

determination for the worst that might happen.— Exclusive of the powerful bodies of regulars, and excellently disciplined militia, that were stationed wherever any danger of an attempt on shore might be apprehended, such a judicious arrangement was made of the naval forces remaining for domestic defence, that notwithstanding the alarming superiority of the enemy, means were found to provide for the commercial navigation of Britain in every quarter, and at the same time to face and repel hostilities wherever they were exercised.

The chief objects of attention in this arduous crisis, were to prevent the junction of the Dutch fleet with those of France and Spain, to intercept their trade in the Baltic, and to protect that of Britain in those seas; to relieve Gibraltar, at this period in great danger, and to cut off those supplies that France was now preparing to send to her fleets and settlements in the East and West Indies.

All these were objects of equal and indispensable necessity, and required the utmost watchfulness and diligence in their execution. The last, in particular, demanded the most immediate and vigorous exertion. Eighteen large vessels were loading at Brest with provisions, and warlike necessaries of all kinds, and with a body of troops to reinforce M. de Suffrein in India. They were escorted by two ships of seventy-four guns, one of sixty-four, and some frigates.

Intelligence of the intended departure of this convoy arrived in time to dispatch twelve sail of the line, under Admiral Barrington, in quest of it. He fell in with it on the twentieth of April: the French endeavoured to avoid him, but were so closely pursued, that in order to favour their escape, the largest of their men of war was compelled to stand an engagement with the *Foudroyant*, Captain Jarvis, which was the only ship in

the British squadron that had been able to come up with them. It lasted an hour, during which the slaughter on board the French ship, and the damage done to it, was very great in proportion to that space of time. More than eighty men were killed, and a much greater number wounded, when she struck to the *Foudroyant*, of which the loss was so inconsiderable, that only a few men were wounded, not one of whom died; a circumstance unprecedented in so sharp, though short an engagement.

In the mean time the chase continued with great vigour. Captain Maitland fell in with, and took a ship of sixty-four guns; twelve of the convoy were also captured. The value of their cargoes was immense in regard to the purpose of their destination. The number of prisoners exceeded two thousand, of whom more than one half were regular troops.

The success of this squadron having secured one of the most essential objects in view, it next became necessary to keep a watchful eye on the Dutch, who lay in great force at the Texel, with the double intent of convoying their trade to the Baltic, and of forming afterwards a junction with the combined fleets of their French and Spanish allies.

Twelve ships of the line sailed from Portsmouth to the coast of Holland under Lord Howe. On receiving intelligence of his approach, the Dutch fleet, which was already at sea, on its proposed voyage, returned immediately into port. After cruising three weeks in these seas, during which the enemy remained within the Texel, a dangerous and epidemic illness breaking out in his squadron, Lord Howe returned to Portsmouth, where diligent preparations were making to put the Channel fleet in a proper condition to face the great naval force that was shortly expected on the British coast.

Two powerful squadrons, one of French, the other of Spanish ships, had joined at Cadiz; from whence

whence they proceeded in company to the northern extremity of the Bay of Biscay, in expectation of being reinforced by another squadron from Brest. While cruising in these latitudes, they met with a numerous convoy of British ships for Newfoundland and Canada, fifteen of which fell into their hands.

Information arriving that a large fleet of merchantmen was on its way from Jamaica, the protection of it became a matter of such importance, that notwithstanding the vast number of the enemy waiting to intercept it, it was resolved that the ships in readiness should forthwith put to sea. They amounted to no more than twenty-two sail of the line, but they were commanded by Lord Howe, and Admirals Barrington, Ross, and Kempfelt.

Never were the naval abilities of Lord Howe more fully experienced than upon this critical occasion. The force of the enemy was more than double his own; yet his dispositions were so masterly, that they were unable to circumvent him; and he frustrated their designs upon the Jamaica fleet, so completely, that it arrived in perfect safety at the different places of its destination.

The reputation obtained by these brilliant exertions, was clouded, however, by the most melancholy event that had befallen the British navy since the commencement of the war.

The distress to which the garrison of Gibraltar was at this time reduced, required such instant relief, that every expedition was used in preparing as strong a fleet for that important purpose as could be collected. It consisted of the best and stoutest ships in the British navy. Among these was the Royal George, of one hundred and ten guns, esteemed the noblest ship in the service. It had been the favourite of Lord Hawke, and other great naval officers, and had done essential service on a variety

of important occasions. It was undergoing at this time some repairs, and an examination of its condition, which required it to be somewhat laid on the side; but neither of them were so considerable as to oblige the company to quit her, or to take out her guns or stores, or equipments of any kind. She was therefore full of people; not only her own complement of men was on board, but numbers of others, women and children especially, who were come to take leave of their husbands and fathers before their departure. While the workmen were busied in the manner described, a gale of wind suddenly arose, which laid her entirely on the side: her ports being all open, the water rushed in from all parts, and she sunk in a few minutes. Of the numbers she contained at this unfortunate hour, amounting, it was thought, to near a thousand, not above four hundred were saved.

But the loss which was most felt and lamented, as being irreparable at this critical season, was that of Admiral Kempenfelt, and the many brave officers and sailors who perished with him. No vessel in the fleet had a greater proportion of able seamen: he himself was reputed one of the most experienced naval officers in the whole world. Though advanced in years, being almost seventy, he added to the knowledge and judgment obtained by long service, a vivacity and quickness of execution, that qualified him for the most arduous and complicated trials.—He was universally allowed to be a man peculiarly calculated for the difficult times in which he now lived.

The grief and concern of the public at this unexpected disaster, was universal throughout the nation. The merit of this great officer, and the deprivation of his abilities at a juncture when they were so much needed, rendered the lamentation for his loss very deep and sincere. Nor did it terminate

nate in expressions of sorrow ; a most generous contribution was raised for the relief of the widows and children of the seamen who were lost on this melancholy occasion, which happened on the twenty-ninth of August, eighty-two.

In the mean time, the preparations relating to Gibraltar, were continued with an attention and diligence which the importance of that object well merited. The siege had now lasted three years, and all Europe was in suspense in what manner it would close. The defence it had made excited universal admiration, and reflected an honour on the British nation, which, added to its late successes in the West Indies, began to render the prodigious efforts against this fortress very doubtful, and to occasion no little anxiety among those of the enemy who had hitherto been sanguine in their expectations of success.

The reduction of Minorca had indeed spread a general satisfaction throughout Spain ; and, it was imagined, would produce an emulation in those who were employed against Gibraltar, which might have proved of effectual utility. But the difference between the two places was such, that the most intelligent people withheld their hopes, and did not look with any warmth of confidence on the probability that the latter would share the same fate as the former. Confined within the narrow limits of its fortifications, the garrison of St. Philip had in a manner been inclosed in a prison, where want of room, and proper accommodation, had produced numberless inconveniences, and subjected the troops to that illness which forced them to surrender, by disabling them from doing duty. Minorca was also at a vast distance from all succour, and its position laid it open to France on the one side, and to Spain on the other.

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of Gibraltar was such, as enough limited to an inconsiderable more free and open air. It being almost surrounded by the accessible by nature still more than only part where it communicated with the sea, it was so powerfully fortified, in such a strong condition, that the ingenuous and expert engineers had hitherto proved ineffectual; and little more impression had been made on its defences, than on the first day they

nsiderations, the generality of which did not allow there was a just founded certainty of succeeding in the attempt; having repeatedly failed in so many attempts, in it, wherein so much valour and gallantry was so conspicuously displayed.

After this victory met with success at Minorca, the nation felt a revival of its hope of recovering the lost dominions. The difficulties at Gibraltar, The origin of the expedition against that island, and the reasons of the king, it is of course natural to suppose, in the completion of his design in order to secure the dominions, should be led to make more vigorous efforts than ever, for the attaining of an object which he had still more at heart than the former.

He expressed on the conquest of Minorca, his highest generosity; appointing the Duke of Medina Sidonia to the command of his armies, and to the conquest of Gibraltar. He now determined to call into action the whole strength of the Spanish fleet, and to transfer it to the Crown, from which it had been torn, together with Minorca, as a consequence of the times. He considered the safety of his own personal

personal honour, to recover it at a period that seemed so favourable as the present to such an undertaking.

It was obvious, nevertheless, that new methods must be adopted in its prosecution, the former having constantly failed. The conflagration of the town had only ruined the inhabitants, without producing any other effect, than to cast an odium on the besiegers in the eyes of all Europe, as if they revenged themselves on the defenceless people, for the disgrace of being unable to make any impression on the garrison.

Among the various projects that were formed, that which was proposed by the Chevalier D'Arcon, a French engineer of distinction, proved the most acceptable to the Court of Spain: it was attended with a vast expence; but, as it seemed to promise success, that was an object of little consideration.

The plan of this celebrated engineer was to construct such floating batteries, as might neither be liable to be sunk, nor set on fire. With this view their bottoms were made of the thickest timber, and their sides of wood and cork long soaked in water, with a large layer of wet sand between. Their thickness was such, that they were impenetrable to a cannon shot. To prevent the effects of the red-hot balls, a number of pipes were contrived, to carry water through every part of the vessel; and a quantity of pumps were provided to furnish them with a continual supply of water for that purpose. A cover of rope netting sheltered the people at the batteries from the fall of bombs. It was made sloping, that they might roll off, and spread with wet hides to prevent fire.

The number of these floating batteries amounted to ten. They were made out of the hulls of large vessels, some of fifty and sixty guns, cut down for that purpose, and carrying from twenty-eight to

ten guns each, with about half as many in reserve against accidents. Each gun was served by thirty-six artillery men. These floating batteries were to be seconded by eighty large boats, mounted with guns and mortars of heavy metal. A multitude of frigates and ships of force, and some hundreds of small craft, were to accompany them with troops, for the instant execution of what might occur as necessary to be performed.

The quantities of timber, iron, ammunition, and warlike stores, implements and utensils of every denomination, employed upon this occasion, were enormous. The heavy artillery was computed to exceed a thousand pieces, and the gunpowder four score thousand barrels.

To the land-force already encamped before the place, a body of twelve thousand choice troops from France was now added. The corps of engineers was the flower of what France and Spain could furnish; and the camp was crowded with volunteers of the best families in both kingdoms. Numbers of military gentlemen came from every part of Europe to be witnesses of the stupendous transactions that were daily taking place at this famous siege; which was now compared to the most famous recorded in history.

Allured by the prospect of beholding the reduction of this fortress, two Princes of the Blood Royal of France came to the siege, some time after the command of it had devolved to the Duke of Crillon. Those were the Count of Artois, brother to the King of France, and the Duke of Bourbon, his cousin. Their arrival was marked by a behaviour full of attention and politeness both to the Governor and his garrison. The Count of Artois transmitted a packet of letters for various individuals in the garrison, which had been intercepted and carried to Madrid, where they had been detained,

tained, and which he requested he might be the instrument of conveying to those for whom they were designed. Both he and the Duke of Bourbon signified, by a letter written in their name to General Elliott, the high regard and esteem they entertained for his person and character. The Duke of Crillon himself took this opportunity to express the same sentiments, and to intreat the General to accept of some refreshments.

General Elliott's answer was a pattern of soldierly frankness and civility. After expressing his respect for the marks of consideration bestowed on him by the two Princes, he informed the Duke, that by accepting of his present he had infringed the resolution he had taken, and faithfully kept since the commencement of the siege, to procure no provisions for his private use, and to partake of plenty or scarcity in common with his fellow-soldiers; requesting him, for these reasons, to confer no favours of that kind on him in future.

In the mean time, the prodigious preparations carrying on against the place, awakened the confidence of the besiegers to such a degree, that they looked on the reduction of it as a matter of absolute certainty. They began to be impatient at the delays that arose, in the bringing of matters to that point of perfection and readiness that was proposed; and manifested the utmost eagerness to make trial of the efficacy of the vast project in agitation.

These were not, however, the sole motives for its acceleration. It was well known in Spain that a powerful fleet was preparing in England for the relief of Gibraltar, commanded by officers of great valour and experience, and who would not fail to exert themselves, with the utmost resolution, to preserve a place of so much importance. The incomparable superiority in number of the combined fleets of both kingdoms, did not quiet the anxiety concerning

concerning the event that might ensue from an engagement with that of Great Britain.

Impelled by these various considerations, the resolution was taken, as soon as the designed arrangements were in a state of sufficient forwardness, to lose no time in carrying the proposed scheme into execution. Every thing seemed to concur in favour of this determination. A most violent spirit of reciprocal strife and emulation had taken possession of the French and Spanish officers and soldiers : They were perpetually contending who should give the most daring proofs of their respective bravery. While they were in this temper, it was naturally concluded, that no efforts would be wanting to give success to the operations in view, that depended on the ardour and intrepidity of those who were to be employed in their execution.

General Elliott was not ignorant, on the other hand, that inventions of a peculiar kind were prepared against him ; and that they were of so terrible and powerful a nature, that the besiegers looked upon them as infallible for the accomplishment of their intent. Though he was not acquainted with the particulars relating to those contrivances, his own judgment directed him in forming a just idea of their general construction and principles. He now turned his attention to the counteracting of them in the most efficacious manner ; not doubting but the vigour and resolution which had hitherto so conspicuously signalized the behaviour of his people, would accompany them in any trial to which they might be exposed.

The enemy having by this time pushed some of their works very near to the town, the Governor determined to try the effect of a cannonade with hot shot and shells upon them. The batteries of the place opened upon them on the morning of the eighth of September, and continued without intermission,

mission during the best part of the day. The execution they did was beyond what had been expected. Two large batteries were set on fire and consumed, together with various other works; and another battery was so much damaged, as to require a thorough re-construction.

The loss of men on the part of the besiegers was very considerable, from the necessity they were under to lay themselves open to the whole fire of the place, in order to extinguish the conflagration it had occasioned. Their works were on fire at such a multiplicity of places at the same time, that it was not without the extremest efforts they were able to stop its progress.

From this specimen of the efficacy of red-hot balls, great hopes were now entertained by the garrison that they would be able by the same means to succeed against the floating batteries.

In order to take revenge for the destruction they had suffered, the enemy opened next morning a battery of sixty-four cannon of the largest dimensions, which was shortly accompanied by a dreadful fire from other batteries, both of guns and mortars.—The number of the first employed this day exceeded one hundred, and of the second threescore.

On that and the following day, nine sail of the enemy's line of battle made an attack on the batteries that had been erected at Europa Point, so called from being the most southern extremity of the European continent. Captain Curtis, of the Brilliant frigate, who had already distinguished himself eminently during the course of the siege, commanded a large body of seamen, who were formed into a brigade, and did duty at the batteries on shore.—They were encamped near those of Europa Point, which were entirely committed to their management. They served them so effectually, that the enemy could make no impression in that quarter,

quarter, and were forced to retire, after having received so much damage, that two of their principal ships were obliged to withdraw to the bay of Algeziras, opposite to Gibraltar, for the purpose of being repaired.

On the twelfth of September, the enemy were taken up with preparations for the ensuing day.—The combined fleets of France and Spain were seen steering through the Straits, and standing in for the bay; where, on forming a junction with those already there, they amounted to forty-eight sail of the line, besides four fifties, and a multitude of frigates. This was the most formidable armament ever seen in the bay of Gibraltar. The numbers employed by land and sea at this period against that fortress, were estimated at above one hundred thousand.

The thirteenth of September was the day destined to decide the fate of Gibraltar. Early in the morning, the ten floating batteries came forward, commanded by Don Buenaventura de Moreno, a Spanish officer of great gallantry, and who had signalised himself at the taking of Minorca. The number of cannon mounted upon them amounted to one hundred and seventy-two, besides the reserves.—They had on board between five and six thousand men. By ten o'clock they got into their appointed stations, anchoring in a line, at about a thousand yards distance from the shore.

As soon as they were properly arranged, they began a heavy cannonade, and were seconded by all the cannon and mortars in the enemy's lines and approaches. At the same instant the garrison opened all its batteries, both with hot and cold shot from the guns, and shells from the howitzers and mortars. This terrible fire continued without intermission on either side until noon; when, to the great satisfaction of the besieged, they found that their

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own began to gain the superiority, and that of the floating batteries began to slacken. About two o'clock the principal of these batteries, commanded in person by Don Moreno, was observed to emit smoke, as if on fire, and some men were seen busy upon the roof, searching from whence it proceeded. Encouraged by this discovery, the fire from the garrison was kept up without the least discontinuance or diminution; while that from the floating batteries was perceived visibly to decrease. About seven in the evening they fired but a few guns, and that only at intervals. At midnight the Admiral's ship was plainly discovered beginning to burn, and an hour after it was completely in flames. Eight more of these batteries took fire successively. Upon the signals of distress which they made, all the launches, feluccas, and boats of the enemy came up with all speed to their assistance, and began to take the men out of the burning vessels; but they soon met with interruption. Captain Curtis, who lay ready with the gun-boats, to take advantage of any favourable circumstance, came upon them at two in the morning, and forming a line on the enemy's flank, advanced and fired upon them with such order and expedition, as to throw them immediately into confusion. They were so astonished and disconcerted at this sudden and unexpected attack, that they fled precipitately with all their boats, totally abandoning the floating batteries, in which numbers of their people were left to perish.

This would undoubtedly have been their fate, had not Captain Curtis, extricated them from the flames, at the imminent hazard of his life, and that of his men. The danger he encountered in order to save them was such, that while his boat was along-side one of the largest floating batteries, it blew up, and the fragments of its wreck spreading to a vast circum-

ference, some heavy pieces of timber fell into his boat, and pierced through its bottom, killing one man, and wounding others. He escaped with difficulty out of this boat, which was sunk, with another, through the same accident.

The number of individuals preserved from destruction through the humane endeavours of the garrison, amounted to about four hundred. Many of them were picked up floating on rafts and timbers. The blowing up of the batteries, as the flames reached their powder-rooms, and the discharge of their guns, as the metal became heated by the fire, rendered the saving of those who were on board of them a very dangerous attempt. But the compassion excited by their distress, and the supplications they were seen to make by their gestures, could not be resisted. The behaviour of the garrison to these unfortunate people met with the warmest acknowledgments of the enemy; and, added to the noble defence they made on this memorable day, greatly contributed to raise the character of the British nation among the Spaniards and the French, and indeed through all Europe.

The floating batteries were every one consumed. The violence of their explosion was such, as to burst open doors and windows at a great distance ashore. This was the terminating scene of this awful and tremendous business; the report of which had brought thousands of spectators from all parts. The shores, the plains, the hills, in the vicinity of Gibraltar were crowded with multitudes, who had flocked hither in full expectation of being witnesses of its reduction.

The loss sustained by the enemy was industriously concealed: but by a multitude of concurring proofs, it was evidently very great. Including wounded and prisoners, the former especially, who filled their hospitals, the number was reckoned to exceed two thou-

thousand : a heavy loss, when it is considered that it consisted in a great measure of their most expert gunners and artillery-men.

The combined fleets of France and Spain were mere spectators of this catastrophe. It had been proposed that they should co-operate upon this interesting occasion, by attacking the garrison at Europa Point, and in such places as appeared most exposed to an attempt by sea. This, it has since been asserted, would have occasioned a material diversion of its force, and must, by dividing it, have weakened considerably the means of the vigorous defence that was made in those parts that were actually attacked. The reason assigned for the inaction of the fleet was the want of wind.

The detriment sustained by the garrison in these various attempts of the enemy was so inconsiderable, as effectually to discourage the latter from prosecuting an enterprize in which they made so little progress. The impression made on its works and defences, notwithstanding the weight of metal and quantity of artillery employed against them was hardly perceptible. The list of slain and wounded since the middle of August, when the operations against the garrison had been carried on with unusual vigour, amounted only to one captain, and one lieutenant, with sixty-five soldiers slain, and to twelve other officers, with three hundred and eighty soldiers wounded.

It is probable the thirteenth of September, eighty-two, will long be remembered in France and Spain. It put a final period to all the hopes that had been conceived of reducing Gibraltar by force. The repulse which their bravest troops and best officers met with on that day, both at sea and land, was an humiliation that sunk deep into their minds : especially when it was reflected with how much presumption in their own favour they had calculated the

time that Gibraltar would hold out, when assailed by the terrible machines which they had prepared for its destruction, and had confidently pronounced irresistible. Twenty-four hours had to some appeared too long a space to allow for opposition, and those who were less sanguine exposed themselves to censure. The Duke of Crillon himself was accused of affecting too much modesty, in extending the garrison's resistance to a fortnight.

The success of the British arms at Gibraltar, confirmed the opinion which had generally taken place on the victory obtained in the West-Indies by Admiral Rodney, that Great Britain would rise superior to all her enemies. The name of General Elliott became famous through all Europe. His conduct and bravery reflected the highest honour on the British nation; and he was justly deemed one of the principal supporters of its glory and fortune, in the midst of the imminent perils that surrounded it on every side.

Still, however, another difficulty remained to be overcome, before Gibraltar could be considered as in a state of security. Notwithstanding the failure of their attempt on the thirteenth, the enemy were not without hope, that from want of ammunition and provisions, the garrison would at length be compelled to surrender, without any further exertion against it than the prevention of supplies. They were well acquainted with their diminution in that fortress. Its defence on the last attack had consumed an immense quantity of powder and ball; no less than four thousand shot had been expended, according to the enemy's account, on their floating batteries only. Several days previous to this, the fire of the garrison had necessarily been very great, in order to cope with that of the besiegers; which was so prodigious, as to have been computed at six thousand cannon shot, and a thousand shells every twenty-

twenty-four hours. Provisions were known also to be extremely scarce in the place.

Depending therefore on these deficiencies, they continued closely to blockade it, and to cut off all communication. The only channel remaining for the conveyance of necessaries to the garrison was by sea, and they now looked upon themselves as masters on that element. They did not imagine that it would be possible for Great Britain to collect a naval force sufficient to dispossess them of the Bay of Gibraltar, before they had obliged it to surrender through distress ; and the condition of the place was such, that they were entirely satisfied a few days would reduce it to the last extremity.

But the indispensable necessity of relieving the wants of the brave garrison that defended it, together with the high sense of honour that animated the British nation and Government for its preservation, overcame all obstacles. Such diligence was used, that a fleet was assembled at Portsmouth, consisting of thirty-five ships of the line, in excellent condition, and manned with the best officers and sailors in Europe. The command of it was given to Lord Howe ; and he was accompanied by Admirals Barrington, Milbank, Hood, Sir Richard Hughes, and Commodore Hotham, all men of noted professional eminence.

It happened fortunately at this period, that a large fleet of merchantmen were safely arrived from the Baltic, and that a Dutch squadron, which had been cruising on the coast of Holland, not finding it practicable to penetrate southwards to join the French, had retired into Port, and given up the intention of attempting such a junction during the present season.

When the British fleet sailed from Portsmouth, it left the nation in the utmost anxiety for the fate of Gibraltar. Contrary winds and unfavourable

weather retarded its progress; and it was not till after gaining the southern coast of Portugal, that it received information of the defeat of the enemy's attempt on the thirteenth of September.

On the 11th of October Lord Howe entered the Straits, and several of the storeships destined for Gibraltar came safe to anchor under the cannon of that fortress, without molestation from the enemy.

A violent storm arising during the night of the tenth, had occasioned much damage in the combined fleet. Two ships of the line went ashore near Algeziras; two more were driven out of the Bay into the Mediterranean; others lost their masts, and most of them suffered considerably. One in particular, a ship of seventy guns, was carried by the storm across the Bay, and ran aground under the works of Gibraltar, where she was taken by the garrison, with her whole complement of men, consisting of seven hundred. Notwithstanding the endeavours of the enemy to destroy her, she was safely got off, and put into a proper condition.

On the thirteenth the combined fleet put to sea, with a view to prevent the remaining shore-ships, that had overshot the Bay to the East, from making good their entrance into it, and at the same time to rejoin the two ships that had been separated from the main body by the storm. Having the advantage of the wind, they bore down upon the British fleet, which drew up in order of battle to receive them. Notwithstanding their superiority, they declined a near approach. On the wind becoming more favourable the next day to the British fleet, Lord Howe took that opportunity to pass into the Bay the storeships that were in company.

On the eighteenth, the remaining storeships were conveyed to Gibraltar, the troops, for the reinforcement of the place were landed, with a large supply

supply of powder, and the wants of the garrison amply provided for in every respect.

Having thus accomplished the purpose in view, Lord Howe prepared to avail himself of the favourable wind that still continued, for returning thro' the Straits to the westward. But at break of day on the nineteenth, the combined fleet, which had given no interruption to the operations in the Bay, during the preceding days, appeared in sight at a little distance from the British fleet, at that time between the points of Europa and Ceuta. As it had no room in that situation to form in order of battle, it repassed the Straits, and was followed by the enemy.

But though it consisted but of thirty-four ships of the line, which gave them, as they had forty-six, a superiority of twelve, they still retained the advantage of the wind. The British fleet formed to leeward to receive them, and they were left uninterruptedly to take the distance at which they should think fit to engage. They did not however begin firing till sunset, directing it on the van and rear, and seeming to point their chief attack on the latter. They continued their fire along their whole line, at a considerable distance, and with little effect until ten at night. It was returned occasionally from different ships of the British fleet, as the nearer approach of the enemy at times afforded an opportunity of making any impression upon them.

What the French commanders had principally in view, was to cut off a part of the rear division, which was considerably aback of the rest; but on nearing it, they met with so spirited a reception, that they soon lost the hope of succeeding, and desisted from their attempt, after sustaining no small damage.

Next morning the enemy was perceived at a great distance, standing apparently for the harbour of

Cadiz. Lord Howe having thus given the enemy a fair opportunity of engaging him, did not think it adviseable to follow them. The end of his expedition had been fully answered, and his fleet was beginning to be short of water and provisions. For these reasons he held on his course to England.

The victory obtained over the French fleet in the West-Indies by Admiral Rodney, the repulse of the French and Spaniards at Gibraltar by General Elliott, and the relieving of it by Lord Howe, in the face of so superior an enemy, were the heaviest blows that had been given to the confederacy against Great Britain. They wrought an entire new turn in the face of affairs both in Europe and America, and in a great measure decided the fate of the war. Through them the reputation of the British arms, and the honour of the British flag, were upheld with a splendour, that had never been exceeded in the most prosperous periods. They shewed, that the difficulties of the times, instead of depressing the genius of Britain, had called forth a spirit of exertion, that seemed to animate its fleets and armies in proportion as the obstacles increased, with which they had to contend.

In the mean time, new veins of resources, that had lain latent in the fulness of ease and security, were now brought to light, to the utter astonishment of the enemies of this country, who were annually prognosticating the impossibility of its discovering any further means of continuing a resistance that involved it in such enormous expences. The impediments they met with themselves, in providing for the support of the war, taught them how formidable that rival must be, who could alone stand his ground against so many adversaries.

These various considerations operated so efficaciously on the powers at enmity with Britain, that they began greatly to relax in the projects and determinations

nations they had been so sanguine in forming to her detriment. She now recovered that weight and ascendancy which had appeared before to be on the decline. It was not only the strength of her numerous foes, that had been impaired by her late successes ; the spirit and vigour with which they had acted hitherto was materially broken, and subsided in a degree that quickly became visible to the world. This was an effect of the most essential consequence, at a time when, notwithstanding the firmness displayed by the nation, a safe and honourable termination of the war was earnestly desired by all the parties that had so long been at variance with each other, and that still continued so fatally to divide it.

C H A P. LXVII.

Hostilities in America.—Transactions in the East Indies.

1782.

IT happened very fortunately for the views of the American Congress, that the successes obtained by the British arms were posterior to that misfortune which had befallen them in Virginia, during the former campaign. The discouragement felt by the allies of America was such, that had not that event taken place previously to the defeats which occasioned this depression, the colonists would still, in all probability, have remained exposed to the calamities they had so long endured, with no better prospect of terminating them than before.

It was therefore, with sufficient reason, they considered the preceding year as the epocha of their intire deliverance from all apprehensions on the part of Great Britain. It had compleated the emancipation of the American Continent, and left all the colonies in a situation of permanent security, with respect to the main objects for which they had been so vigorously contending.

Still, however, they were not freed from that state of war, in which although no destruction is apprehended, yet perplexities cannot fail to arise, and a multitude of inconveniences ensue, as well to the public as to individuals.

Notwithstanding the failure of the expedition against Virginia, and the reduction of the forces employed against that Province, the remains of that gallant army, which had performed such great things in the Carolinas, was still in possession of the capital of the southern part, and overawed the country in a most effectual and alarming manner.

Lord

Lord Rawdon, after the temporary cessation of hostilities, occasioned by the excessive heat and unwholesomeness of the summer months in the preceding year, had, upon his departure for England, left the command of the British troops to Colonel Stuart. As soon as the violence of the weather was abated, they took the field, in order to oppose the progress of General Greene. That vigilant and active officer had assembled a large body of troops, and descending from the upper country, was on his march to the Congaree, with an intention to pass it, and attack the Colonel in the post he occupied on the banks of that river, at a place called Mac-cord's Ferry.

The British troops were at this time in very disadvantageous circumstances. They were afflicted with illness, and in want of provisions. In this condition, however, they were obliged to exert uncommon activity to prevent a supply that was coming to their camp, from being intercepted.—They moved for this purpose to a place called Eutaw Springs, where, from the goodness of the situation, Colonel Stuart determined to make a stand, and establish a post.

General Greene, who penetrated into his design, marched with all expedition to attack him, before he could accomplish it. His force consisted of about four thousand well disciplined men. The British troops were computed at two thousand. On intelligence of General Greene's approach, they met him at three miles from their camp in order of battle.

The engagement began between eight and nine in the morning, and continued till about one. It resembled in many particulars the action at Guildford, from the diversified manner in which it was fought, sometimes in open, sometimes in woody ground, and from the broken and detached conflicts

licts that took place between both parties, as they happened to be separated from their respective main bodies by the nature of the different spots on which they were engaged.

From the superiority of the enemy's number, and the frequent attacks of their numerous cavalry, the British troops found it necessary to make a retreating fight as far as their camp. The Americans followed them close, and attempted to force it. They charged with their bayonets, and behaved with unusual intrepidity; but the resistance they met was so judiciously conducted, that, notwithstanding the obstinacy of their attack, they were not able to succeed.

The ground on which the British troops were posted afforded them several advantages. They had taken possession of a large and strong brick house upon it, from which the enemy were not able to dislodge them. They had also occupied a bushy field, so thick set, that the American cavalry, after repeated attempts to break in upon them, was repulsed with great loss, and Colonel Washington, who commanded them, was wounded, and made prisoner.

After a long and severe action, wherein both fides displayed the highest resolution, General Greene was obliged to withdraw his men. The fire from the house was however so heavy, that after losing those who served two pieces of cannon that had been brought against it, and who were slain upon the spot, they were compelled to retire without them.

Their killed, wounded, and prisoners, amounted to about one thousand. They carried off however most of their wounded, and retreated in good order to seven miles distance from the field of battle.

But notwithstanding the British troops were victorious, their want of cavalry prevented them from improving their success, and that of the Americans

cans covered their retreat so effectually, that they could not be pursued.

Another circumstance contributed greatly to favour the Americans. The British troops had been some days in much want of bread. To supply that deficiency, parties were sent out every morning to collect potatoes, as far as they could venture into the country. It happened unfortunately, that on the very morning of the action, three or four hundred men employed in this business were way-laid by the enemy, and fell into their hands, to the material diminution of the British army, which greatly experienced the want of them in the engagement that immediately followed.

From the scantiness of provision, and the necessity of providing for the safety of the sick and wounded, who were in considerable numbers, together with the reduced state of his force in consequence of the fight, and of the accident that preceded it, Colonel Stuart deemed it proper to draw nearer to Charlestown.

General Greene, on perceiving this motion, detached a large body to harass the British troops on their march; but they found them in such compact order, and so well prepared, that they thought it unadvisable to give them any molestation.

These transactions, which took place about the middle of September, eighty-one, put a period to all military operations of any consequence in the southern Colonies. From this time both the Americans and the British troops stationed upon that continent seem to have considered themselves as spectators of the great and important events that fell out in the other parts of the globe during the remainder of the contest.

These however were not viewed by either of them, or the rest of the world, as of a nature to bring about any material alteration with respect to the Colonies.

Colonies. The revolution which had severed them from the British empire was universally looked upon as completely effected. The only objects yet undecided were of a collateral kind, and could not in their future settlement affect but in a secondary manner the great system already established.

While the destiny of this vast portion of the British empire underwent such a decision in the West, the fate of its immense possessions in the East still hung in suspense. The successes obtained over Hyder Ally, and his French and Dutch allies were great; but the resources of this Indian Prince, supported by his uncommon abilities, and the assistance he was to derive from these two confederates, were matters of serious consideration to the English, who were contending against both in India, and whose situation, tho' not unprosperous at the present hour, might still be considered as critical.

They could not readily forget to what extremities he had reduced them, and with what difficulty they had emerged from them, contrary to the expectation of their enemies, and almost their own.— They knew that France would strain every nerve for their ruin, and that a powerful squadron was now in the Indian seas, prepared to co-operate with the naval strength of Holland against them on that element, while Hydef Ally renewed his attacks by land.

In the mean time, the preceding campaign had terminated highly to their advantage. Exclusive of the victories obtained over Hyder Ally in the field, they had concluded it by the capture of the principal settlement of the Dutch on the coast of Coromandel. The loss of Negapatam was the severest blow these could have received in this quarter; and besides the intrinsic detriment done to their interest, had greatly dispirited them.

While

While they were yet under the impressions occasioned by so severe and unexpected a loss, Sir Edward Hughes resolved to execute the project he had in view against Trincomale, in the island of Ceylon, one of the most important possessions of Holland in the Indian ocean.

This Dutch settlement is situated on the northern coast of that island, verging to the east: it lies on a spacious and secure bay, which with several others adjoining to it, forms the most capacious sea-port in all India. The spices it produces, especially cinnamon, render it, in point of value, one of the richest acquisitions that ever fell into the hands of that industrious people.

These were sufficient motives to induce the British Admiral to proceed with all convenient expedition against a place of which the reduction would be attended with so many advantages. As soon as he had weathered out the monsoon, that set in immediately after the surrender of Negapatam, he sailed for Trincomale, where he arrived about the beginning of January, eighty-two.

Having taken possession of the principal bay, he landed a detachment of seamen, marines, and selected sepoys, who under the command of Captain Gell, of the Monarca, marched directly to the fort called Trincomale. They soon mastered it, to the great satisfaction of the Admiral, as it commanded the chief landing-place, and enabled him to set ashore whatever would be requisite for the attack against Fort Ostenburgh, the principal place of strength upon the island, and by the capture of which the settlement would be completely reduced.

This fort stands on a lofty hill, overlooking and commanding the harbour. But in its vicinity another hill arose superior to it in height, and only within two hundred yards of the fort. Of this a detachment of sailors and marines having taken possession.

session, Sir Edward Hughes sent a summons of surrender to the Dutch Governor, representing to him the inutility of making any defence after the loss of such a post, from whence the fort must undoubtedly be battered to pieces, as soon as the cannon for that purpose had been planted. But the Governor's answer was, that he was bound in duty and honour to defend the fort to the last extremity.

It was the earnest wish of Sir Edward Hughes and his officers to avoid shedding the blood of people with whom they had lately been upon a footing of kindness. Before the rupture with Holland, various interchanges of friendliness and hospitality had taken place between the Dutch and the English who frequented that harbour. Many, if not most of the gentlemen belonging to the British squadron, had received civilities from the officers of the garrison. An intimate acquaintance subsisted between Sir Edward Hughes and Mr. Hommed the governor of the settlement.

From these motives, the British Admiral warmly pressed that gentleman to desist from a defence which he must be conscious would be needless. He urged him by every reason which friendship and humanity could plead: but his solicitations were ineffectual; the Dutch governor persisting in the determination to hold out to the last.

As compulsion was now become necessary, it was determined to attempt the storming of the lower parts of the fort; these, upon inspection, appeared liable to be carried in this manner, which was preferred to a regular attack, on account of the time it would consume, and the labour it would require to convey a sufficient number of battering pieces to that eminence overlooking Ostenburgh fort, of which possession had been taken.

A party of seamen and marines was therefore selected for the assailing of the lower works;

by the taking of which it was not doubted the place would be soon obliged to surrender. This party advanced at early dawn in great order and silence to the fort. The van had the good fortune to arrive at the foot of the outward wall undiscovered. Entering through the embrasures unperceived, it was immediately seconded by the whole body. The enemy, thus surprised, were not able to make any effectual resistance, and after being driven from their defences, were obliged to submit.

The loss sustained by the British party in this bold enterprize did not exceed threescore killed and wounded. That of the Dutch was very inconsiderable, as the victors gave quarter the moment the enemy demanded it. The acquisitions made on this occasion were two Indiamen, richly laden, besides a number of smaller trading vessels, that lay in the harbour under protection of the fort, and which surrendered as soon as they saw it taken. The fort itself was well provided with artillery, and contained a large quantity of ammunition and military stores. The prisoners amounted to about four hundred Europeans.

The capture of Trincomalee was the second blow given to the Dutch in the East Indies by Sir Edward Hughes. It was heavily felt in Holland; where, on receiving intelligence of this loss, the clamours against the war with Great Britain became greater than ever. The complaint urged with the most vehemence by those who disapproved of it, was, that by embracing the cause of France, Holland had not only met with grievous losses, but had incurred the greatest misfortune that could befall an independent state. It was now forced to look up to France for protection, and had thereby forfeited its consequence in Europe. It had by this imprudent step discovered its internal weakness, and now lay at the mercy not only of the enemy it had made by its com-

complaisance to the French court, but even at the mercy of France itself.

In the mean time, Mr. De Suffrein, at the head of a squadron of eleven sail of the line and several stout frigates, was making the utmost expedition for the coast of Coromandel. On his way thither, he fell in with and took the Hannibal of fifty guns, which had been unhappily separated from the squadron that was coming to the reinforcement of Sir Edward Hughes.

The French Admiral had been informed, that the squadron under this officer consisted only of six ships of the line. In expectation of finding him in this state of inferiority, he hastened to Madras, in order to attack him before the arrival of those ships from which the Hannibal had parted. He appeared off that settlement on the fifteenth of February 1782. His force, including the Hannibal, was now composed of twelve ships of the line, six strong frigates, eight large transports full of troops, and six British prizes.

Happily for Sir Edward Hughes, he had been joined by those ships which M. de Suffrein imagined were still at a distance. They were three in number; a seventy-four, a sixty-four, and a fifty. They found him in Madras road, whither he had repaired shortly after the reduction of Trincomale, to take in stores and provisions, and put his sick ashore. With this addition he now reckoned nine sail of the line.

Mr. De Suffrein had promised himself an easy victory over the small squadron he had expected to encounter. He was therefore very disagreeably surprized at the sight of the ships under Sir Edward Hughes drawn up to receive him. After coming to an anchor about four miles off Madras, he weighed and stood away to the south, as if he had

had entirely abandoned the design of attacking the British squadron.

But Sir Edward Hughes, notwithstanding his inferiority, immediately stood after him, and followed him during the remainder of that day, and the whole of the night. At day-light he perceived that the enemy's transports were making for Pondicherry under the protection of their frigates, and that their line of battle ships were collected in a body at about twelve miles distance.

Sir Edward Hughes hereupon made a signal to chase the frigates and vessels in their company. Six of them were taken, five being English prizes; but the sixth was a French transport of fifteen hundred tons, laden with a numerous train of field artillery, and a prodigious quantity of gunpowder and military stores, besides near three hundred regulars, and a number of land officers.

Had Sir Edward Hughes been better supplied with frigates, it is probable the whole French convoy would have been taken. But the necessity of instantly facing the enemy's line of battle, which was now bearing down upon him, for the assistance of their transports, obliged him to recall such of his own line of battle ships as were in pursuit of them.

The residue of the day was employed in various movements on both sides. The respective squadrons kept near each other during the ensuing night. On the seventeenth, at noon, Mr. De Suffrein perceiving the rear division of the British Squadron unable for want of wind to keep up with the rest, directed his attack upon that part alone. Eight of the enemy's ships bore down upon it. Sir Edward Hughes was the only one of those who were a-head of the rear that could give it assistance. Upon him and Commodore King the efforts of the French chiefly fell. Each had two and sometimes three

vessels of the enemy to contend with. Their main design was to cut off the Commodore's ship, which was a bad sailer: To this intent they kept so violent a fire upon her, that they had almost reduced her to a wreck; when the wind about six o'clock in the afternoon coming round more favourably to the English, they took that opportunity to disengage the Commodore, and to attack the enemy with more advantage. They did it so vigorously, that in less than half an hour they compelled them to withdraw.

The two British ships against which the enemy chiefly directed their fire, those of the Admiral and the Commodore, suffered greatly in this action; but those that attacked them suffered no less. The loss of men in the British squadron amounted to little more than one hundred and thirty killed and wounded; but the same list on board the French exceeded two hundred and fifty, among whom a captain was slain. Two brave and experienced officers fell on the side of the English; Captains Stephens and Reynolds. The first commanded the Admiral's ship, the second that of the Commodore.

The fight having terminated with the close of day, Sir Edward Hughes lay preparing till next morning for a renewal of it; but the French fleet was then entirely out of sight. Upon which he proceeded to Trincomale, in order to repair the damages his squadron had received.

This being accomplished with all expedition, he returned to Madras; from whence, on receiving no tidings of Mr. De Suffrein, he hastened back to Trincomale, with supplies of men and ammunition for that garrison, which he had been apprized was threatened by the enemy, and at the same time to meet a convoy from England with stores and reinforcements.

Mr.

Mr. De Suffrein, who had been informed of this convoy's approach, was also on his way to intercept it. He was descried on the 8th of April. He could not however prevent Sir Edward Hughes from making the coast of Ceylon: But before the British squadron could reach the harbour of Trincomale, the French had an opportunity of gaining the wind of them; and on the twelfth found themselves in so advantageous a position, and the English in so dangerous a one, that they did not hesitate to bear down upon them in order of battle.

The British squadron lay close on a lee-shore, full of rocks and shoals on the one side; and to windward an enemy, superior in strength, was pressing upon it in various directions. Mr. De Suffrein having made such a disposition of his ships as he thought most advantageous, ordered his van division to attack that of Sir Edward Hughes. Himself, with the remainder of his squadron, assailed the British Admiral. He singled him out, and accompanied by another vessel, lay along-side of him a quarter of an hour; during which he kept up a very heavy fire; but his vessel received so much damage in that short space, that making room for others to continue the engagement with the British admiral, he shifted his flag to another vessel, and proceeded to the assistance of two French ships in close fight with a British one, of which he perceived the resistance would require the additional efforts of his own, to be overcome. This was the Monmouth, of sixty-four guns, Captain Alms, who, after sustaining with great resolution this unequal conflict, was, in consequence of his masts being shot away, compelled to drop to leeward out of the line; and would have been captured, had not Sir Edward Hughes hastened with his own and two other ships to his protection.

The fight continued with equal vigour on both sides till towards dark; when the British squadron being only in fifteen fathoms water, Sir Edward Hughes thought it necessary for the security of his squadron to come to an anchor. The French squadron finding itself at the same time much damaged, drew off to a considerable distance.

Both parties had suffered so much in this action, that neither of them were in a condition to renew it. They lay several days in sight of each other, repairing their respective damages, and observing reciprocally their motions.

The French at length thinking probably that their own ships had not been so much hurt in their rigging as those of the English, and were consequently more manageable, bore down in a line of battle upon them; but on discovering how well they were prepared, they stood off, and kept their course till night coming on, they could no longer be seen.

Had the position of the English been less unfavourable, it is probable they would have obtained some very decided advantages, especially as they had lately been reinforced by two ships of the line. The number of their killed and wounded amounted to five hundred and sixty-seven; of these one hundred and forty-seven belonged to the Monmouth: so obstinately had she been assailed by the enemy.

It was remarked, that notwithstanding the French commander sought this action, none of his ships, those excepted that were in his own division, ventured to near the British squadron sufficiently for close action. They kept at a cautious distance from every part of it but the center, though it was obvious that they might have approached on all sides with much advantage, having the wind in their favour, and the English being so land-locked, as to stand more in apprehension on that account than in respect of the enemy. The loss of the French in

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slain and wounded was not less than that of the English; but the condition of their ships was much worse: that of M. de Suffrein and two others were so disabled, as to compel him, by his own confession, to cease the engagement.

Both these actions, though indecisive in regard to the respective squadrons, were however convincing proofs of the naval superiority of the British officers and seamen. They had withstood a superior force, commanded by one of the most resolute men in France, and one who was known to harbour a particular enmity to the English. He had displayed uncommon courage in both engagements, and had exerted himself in such a manner, as showed him no less an able commander than a determined foe: yet his failure was complete in both, and he reaped no other benefit than the acquisition of much personal honour.

This state of affairs was very alarming to Hyder Ally. He had formed the highest expectations from an alliance with France. He had been promised a considerable body of French regulars, who were now stationed in the island of Mauritius, in order to be transported to India by the first conveyance, but only a small detachment of them had been landed; and the arrival of the rest was yet a matter of uncertainty, considering the difficulties that would be thrown in their way by the naval force under Sir Edward Hughes.

This prospect was the more mortifying to Hyder Ally, as his fortune seemed much on the decline at land. While the British squadron was opposing with so much vigour and efficacy the designs of M. de Suffrein on the coast of Coromandel, the army of Hyder Ally, that had held the English settlement of Tellicherry, on the coast of Malabar, blockaded since the commencement of hostilities, had made so little progress, that he began to

lose all hope of reducing it otherwise than by famine. To this purpose his troops surrounded it on every side, and cut off all its communications.

In the beginning of the year eighty-two, it was determined by the Presidency of Bombay to raise the siege. Sir Edward Hughes had in the preceding year been of effectual service in succouring and putting it in a condition to resist the enemy. But it was now so closely pressed, that it was necessary to take the most decisive measures for its relief.— Major Abingdon was placed for this purpose at the head of a powerful reinforcement, with which he proceeded by sea to Tellicherry. Having reconnoitred the position of the enemy, he determined to collect all the troops that could be spared from the necessary guard of the town, and to attack them in their own works. Early on the morning of the eighth of January, he came upon them so unexpectedly, that they were driven from all their lines, and fled to their camp. This was assaulted with equal success. Saddos Cawn, a relation of Hyder Ally, and who commanded his troops on this occasion, was, after an obstinate defence taken prisoner, with above fifteen hundred of his men.— Four hundred were slain on the spot, and a large quantity of provisions, artillery, ammunition, and military stores, with a considerable sum of money, fell into the hands of the victors.

This success gave the English entire possession of all the territory adjacent to Tellicherry, and opened a communication with the British posts in the neighbourhood. But what was of more consequence, it led to an entrance into the principal countries under the dominion of Hyder Ally, and made a diversion which occasioned him much disquietude. Tellicherry was a post from whence they might be annoyed with facility, and it would require

require a powerful army to recover and maintain the ground he had lost in its neighbourhood.

But the success of the British arms in this quarter, though of great importance, was heavily counterbalanced shortly after on the coast of Coromandel. A detachment of chosen troops from Sir Eyre Coote's army lay encamped on the banks of the Coleroon, a river that bounds the district of Tanjour to the north. It was stationed there for the protection of the Company's possessions to the south of Madras, which were menaced with an invasion as soon as Hyder Ally's army should be drawn together again in these parts.

Tippoo Saib having made himself complete master of all the circumstances relating to the strength and situation of this detachment, conceived the design of attacking it, before it could be apprized of his intention, and while it thought itself in a state of entire security, from the great distance of Hyder Ally's army at this time.

In order to make the greater expedition, he set forwards with a less numerous body of men than usual, and with as little incumbrance as possible: but they were the flower of Hyder Ally's army.— They consisted of near fifteen thousand horse, and five thousand foot, and were accompanied by a corps of French regulars. The difficulties of their march were many, but they overcame them with great patience; and crossing the Coleroon, suddenly surrounded the British detachment.

It consisted of two thousand infantry, and about three hundred cavalry, and was commanded by Colonel Brathwaite, a brave and expert officer, whose conduct on this occasion was equally judicious and resolute.

The enemy surrounding him on every side, he formed his men into a square, with their artillery

distributed to their several fronts, and his cavalry in the center. Tippoo Saib attacked him every where, and endeavoured by means of his superior artillery to break his ranks, in order to rush in with his horse; but after a conflict that lasted almost three days, he could make no impression on the British troops. They returned the fire of his musketry and cannon with the utmost intrepidity and vigour, and repulsed successively every effort of his horse to break in upon them.

It was chiefly on these Tippoo Saib relied. He led them in person with great courage; but they were received on their approach with such volleys of grape-shot and musket-fire, that they were constantly thrown into disorder, and forced to retreat. On these occasions the cavalry in the center sallied out upon them, and did great execution.

On the third day of this obstinate engagement, M. Lally finding this method of attack ineffectual, projected another. Rightly conjecturing that the fatigue endured by this handful of men must have greatly exhausted their strength, as well as that so desperate a service must have thinned their numbers, he proposed to Tippoo Saib that the French infantry, which was fresh and entire, should charge one of the fronts of the square, while the three other fronts should be assailed at the same instant by his own troops.

This new plan of attack was executed with all possible vigour, M. Lally headed his men with great spirit. They were supported by flanking parties of Tippoo Saib's best infantry, and a furious discharge of his artillery, most of which was brought up to second this attempt.

It was completely decisive. Though the British troops remained unbroken by the three other attacks, that were made together at the same time, they could not withstand this one. Worn down with toil,

toil, and oppressed with wounds, and consisting mostly of Sepoys, they were no longer able to resist the weight of a superior number of European regulars, coming fresh into action, charging them with their bayonets, and assisted by numerous bodies of men pressing upon them from all sides.

The behaviour of M. Lally upon this occasion did him singular honour. As soon as the British troops were broken, he issued immediate orders that quarters should be given to them. Great slaughter had ensued on the first breaking in of Tippoo Saib's cavalry, but he exerted so much authority, and interposed so effectually, that a stop was put to their rage, and no further effusion of blood was permitted. He even obtained of Tippoo Saib that the prisoners should be entrusted to his care, and treated them with a generosity and attention that greatly added to his character.

This was almost as fatal a day to the English as that wheron Colonel Baillie had been defeated.—A number of British officers perished in this unhappy engagement, and only one remained unwounded.—Colonel Brathwaite displayed a spirit, as well as a conduct, worthy of a better fortune. Though wounded, and losing much blood, he still continued to act with the utmost coolness and resolution. After his example, both officers and men persisted to the last in making every effort that courage could inspire; and though they lost the day, were acknowledged, even by their conquerors, to have gained more reputation by their defence, than they themselves had acquired by their victory.

C H A P. LXVIII.

Transactions in the East Indies.

1872.

THE disaster that had befallen the British arms on the banks of the Coleroon greatly revived the courage and hopes of Hyder Ally. He received an additional motive of satisfaction, by the success his forces met with, in conjunction with those French troops that came from the French islands off the Cape of Good Hope with Mr. De Suffrein.

As soon as this long expected junction had been formed, they proceeded under the command of Mr. Duchemin to invest Cuddalore, a place of strength, but which not being sufficiently provided for a siege, surrendered on capitulation. They took in the same manner some other posts of smaller importance ; after which, being joined by Hyder Ally at the head of a numerous army, he determined to lay siege to Vandiwash, a place of great importance, and the loss of which would prove of essential detriment to the English.

The dangerous situation of their affairs in India, had a long time exercised the attention of the supreme seat of government at Bengal. The main consideration, amidst of the many difficulties wherein they were involved, was to bring about a separate accommodation with the Mahrattas ; the gaining of which point would enable them to direct their whole strength and efforts against Hyder Ally, whom they viewed as a more implacable, as well as a more potent and formidable enemy.

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An opening to a general pacification with the Mahrattas had already been made by a treaty previously concluded with Madajee Scindia, one of the most considerable chiefs of that nation. This was the more favourable an event, as the abilities of that Prince, and his friendly disposition towards the English, had been signalized upon several occasions to their singular benefit.

Through his mediation, terms of reconciliation were at length settled between the residue of his countrymen and the English. These terms were extremely favourable to the latter. Among other particulars, the former engaged themselves to oblige Hyder Ally to restore to the English and their allies all the places he had taken from them. The prisoners made both by him and them to be comprehended in this article. On his acceding to, and fulfilling these stipulations, and remaining at peace with the English, as well as their allies and the Mahrattas, they were to abstain from all acts of enmity against him.

But the most important article of this treaty was, that by which the Mahrattas agreed to permit no other European nation to settle factories in any part of their dependencies. As a compensation for this concession, the English were bound on the other hand, to afford no assistance or countenance whatsoever to any Indian state or nation at enmity with the Mahrattas, as they were by the same rule to give none to the enemies of the English. This negotiation, which was highly beneficial to the English, and established their power and interest in India upon the surest and most permanent foundations, was owing in a very essential measure to the talents and activity, exerted upon this critical occasion by Mr. Anderson, deputed for this purpose by the Governor and Council at Bengal. It was concluded and signed

ed by both parties about the middle of May eighty-two.

The conclusion of this treaty was a severe blow to Hyder Ally. He now beheld the only enemy whom he considered as the main obstruction to his designs, released from the principal incumbrance that perplexed their operations against him. They were now totally freed from that powerful diversion, which their war with the Mahrattas had occasioned in his favour. Those, of whom he had found the alliance so efficacious in the prosecution of his present plan, were now to become his enemies, and to co-operate against him in defeating it. He knew, at the same time, that the jealousy entertained of his power and projects, would not fail to raise him other adversaries, as soon as it became apparent that they could declare themselves with safety. His dependence on the assistance of the French did not, on the other hand, seem justly founded. He had received the greatest promises from that quarter; but his understanding was too solid not to judge, that their power was inadequate to the performance of them. Facts were too strong against them, to imagine that through their means his affairs could be re-established. It was only by gaining a decided superiority at sea that the English could be subdued; and he had been witness that, with an inferior naval force, they had successfully opposed the French on that element. Hence he naturally foresaw, that as soon as they were sufficiently reinforced, they would compel the French to give up all further attempts to aid him; the consequence of which would be the total defeat of the system he had so long and so assiduously been labouring to establish.

To these considerations it was chiefly owing, that, notwithstanding the successes which his son Tippoo Saib and the French troops added to his own had met

met with, he acted with so much circumspection, and appeared so unwilling to hazard any general action with the English.

Upon Hyder Ally's moving towards Vandiwath, Sir Eyre Coote marched immediately to protect it from an attack, not doubting, from the force now assembled under that Prince, that he would risk an engagement sooner than give up an attempt on which he appeared so intent. But the consequences of a defeat in the field were so greatly apprehended by him, that he did not dare to commit his fortune to such a trial: Neither did he seem to place much reliance on the French auxiliaries in his army. Whatever might be the motive, he considered them as greatly inferior to the English in their military character.

On Hyder Ally's declining an engagement, in support of his design against Vandiwath, Sir Eyre Coote determined to take such measures as might compel him to one. As he was so strongly posted, that it appeared impracticable to dislodge him, he made a motion towards a place of great strength, called Arnee, which was the principal deposit of provisions, warlike stores, and necessaries for that Prince's army. The preservation of this place obliged Hyder Ally to quit his advantageous ground. He advanced with such speed, that he came upon the British army unawares, while it was preparing for the last march to Arnee, from which it was no more than five miles distant.

Hyder Ally's conduct upon this occasion was equally cautious and resolute. The British army's march was through low grounds, encompassed on most parts with high hills. Of these he took immediate possession. He planted his cannon upon them, and kept up a heavy fire upon the British troops below, while his numerous cavalry attacked them on every side. This unequal conflict lasted

till

till noon ; the enemy persisting with great vigour to cannonade them from the eminences above, and to use their utmost endeavours to throw them into disorder, and break their line, by means of the repeated attempts of their horsemen on the plain.

Under all these disadvantages, Sir Eyre Coote formed his army into such an order of battle, as enabled him to close in with the enemy much sooner and nearer than they had apprehended. The action now became serious and decisive. The resistance made by Hyder Ally's people was long and obstinate ; but it only proved the superiority of the British troops. Their discipline and valour, together with the judicious dispositions made by their General, rendered them at length completely victorious. The enemy were intirely routed, and put to flight. This engagement happened on the second of June, eighty-two.

But notwithstanding this overthrow, Hyder Ally still kept the field, though at a distance. As the want of cavalry prevented Sir Eyre Coote from pursuing his advantages, that Prince could never be thoroughly defeated. As his own cavalry was exceedingly numerous, by its means he always covered his retreats so effectually, as to lose but few men in making them, and to be in a condition, within a short time, to act upon the offensive. This was signally proved on the present occasion. Five days after the preceding engagement he circumvented an advanced body of the British army, which was surrounded and cut off before it could receive any assistance. He harrassed it at the same time in such a manner, as to compell it to stand perpetually upon its guard, and hardly to enjoy any respite.

The difficulty of subsisting, and the necessity of providing for the relief of the many who were either sick or wounded, together with the excessive heat of the season, induced Sir Eyre Coote to move

nearer to Madras. His own ill state of health obliged him shortly after to relinquish the command of the British forces, which fell to General Stuart.

The vast projects of Hyder Ally meeting with these continual obstructions and discomfitures at land, he was now reduced, to his great mortification, to depend for their success on the better fortune of his French allies at sea.

After the action of the twelfth of April, between the British and French squadrons, the latter withdrew to Batacalo, an harbour in the Isle of Ceylon, where the repairing of their ships employed the French till the beginning of June. They now returned to the coast of Coromandel, where their squadron was amply supplied with provisions by the Dutch; and received a large reinforcement of men, among whom were some hundreds of gunners, from the French who were stationed at Cuddalore, which was now become their principal post and harbour on the coast of Coromandel.

It was the earnest desire and advice of Hyder Ally to Mr. De Suffrein, that as he had a decisive superiority in number of ships, he should lose no time in seeking the British squadron, and fighting it, before that re-inforcement should arrive, which was daily expected from England, and was reported to be very considerable.

The British squadron was at that time at Negapatam, whither Sir Edward Hughes had repaired from Trincomale, as soon as he had refitted his ships, and been informed of the departure of the French squadron from Batacalo.

On the fifth of July Mr. De Suffrein came in sight of Negapatam. On his appearance Sir Edward Hughes immediately put to sea, and stood after him. The evening and night were spent in gaining the wind of the enemy. This being accomplished,

complished, the British fleet bore down upon the French, and commenced a close action, about half an hour past ten in the morning. It continued with great warmth on both sides till near one in the afternoon; when the French ships having received much damage, were thrown into great disorder, one of them, a principal ship, being obliged to quit the line. Fortunately for them, at this juncture, a breeze arose quite contrary to that which had hitherto proved favourable to the English. It threw aback the ships that were closest in action, and enabled the enemy to disengage themselves from the danger they were in.

During the disorder into which this sudden shifting of the wind had thrown the British squadron, the French had time to recover themselves, and to form to windward those which had been least damaged, in order to cover the rest. Sir Edward Hughes, on the other hand, was making his utmost efforts to gain such a position, as would enable him to re-attack the enemy advantageously. But the wind had so scattered his squadron, that only a part of it could renew the engagement; and some of his ships were at such a distance from the others, that they ran the utmost hazard of being cut off by the enemy.

In the afternoon, the French drawing together in a close body, stood away from the British squadron. Hereupon Sir Edward Hughes, who had made ready for another conflict, collected his ships in the same manner, and kept sight of them till dark, when they came to an anchor about nine miles to leeward. On the close of day he anchored off the land between Negapatam and Nagore, and spent the night in repairing the damages received in the action, in expectation of being able to come up with the enemy next morning, and ending the contest decisively. But to his great concern, the French squadron

ton got under sail at break of day, and made off with all speed to Cuddalore : his own ships at the same time being so much hurt in their rigging, that they were not able to pursue the enemy to any effect.

Thus ended this remarkable action, in the fore-part of which the French were so thoroughly defeated, that one of their ships actually struck to the British one that was nearest to her ; but on observing she was in the very act of wearing, in obedience to a signal from the British Admiral, and that some French ships were approaching, she hoisted all the sail she could, fired at the British ship, and made off to her own. It appeared in this engagement, as in all others throughout the war, that the French were unable to stand a close action with the British seamen, on equal terms. Had not an unexpected alteration of wind interposed, it was clear that these latter would have obtained a complete victory.

The reality of the advantage on the side of the English fully appeared in the far greater number of slain and wounded on that of the French, which amounted to near eight hundred, while the same list on board of the British squadron came to little more than three hundred. Among those who fell, was Captain Maclellan, of Sir Edward Hughes's own ship. He was the second Captain slain on board of the Admiral within the space of five months.

M. de Suffrein withdrew to Cuddalore in consequence of this action, in order to repair his squadron. He did this with the greater expedition, as he received information that a large body of French troops, in transports, was arrived off the isle of Ceylon, in company with three ships of the line. This affording him an opportunity of retaliation for the loss he had suffered in the late engagement, he exerted himself to improve it ; and made such progress in the refitting of his squadron, that it was

able to put to sea at the beginning of August. The object he had now in view was an attempt upon Trincomalee.

Sir Edward Hughes was in the mean time taking in provisions and ammunition, and putting his squadron in a proper condition at Madras. But the secret of the departure of M. de Suffrein's squadron from Cuddalore, as well as of the expedition intended against Trincomalee, were so well kept, that the British Admiral received no intelligence of these transactions till a British frigate chasing a French one, which took shelter with the French squadron at Trincomalee, discovered it by this accident, and hastened with the news to the British Admiral at Madras.

Sir Edward Hughes had already dispatched two ships of the line, with supplies, and a reinforcement of troops for the garrison of Trincomalee.—On receiving this information, his squadron being in sufficient readiness, he sailed immediately to the relief of that place: but the weather set in so contrary to him, that all his endeavours to arrive in time were totally ineffectual.

M. de Suffrein had in the mean while formed a junction with the French transports and men of war. With these he proceeded to the harbour of Trincomalee, where the troops effected a landing under the fire of his squadron, and laid close siege to the fort. The garrison was not deficient in necessaries for a defence; but the place was not in a state of strength adequate to resist such a powerful attack as was made by the enemy. Their batteries silenced those of the fort in less than two days, and the commanding officer found himself under a necessity of capitulating. He obtained honourable conditions for his garrison, and security for those that had already been granted to the Dutch, on the preceding capture of the place by the English: a circum-

circumstance that redounded much to the honour and good faith of these.

The suspected approach of Sir Edward Hughes, induced the French Admiral to agree without difficulty to all the demands of the garrison ; and the place was surrendered to the French on the last day of August.

It was with deep concern that Sir Edward Hughes, on his arrival off Trincomale on the second of September, discovered the forts were in the hands of the enemy, who lay in the bay with fifteen ships of the line, while he had no more than twelve. But the spirit of his people was so stimulated with a desire of vengeance, that he did not in the least hesitate to come to an immediate engagement with the enemy, notwithstanding their evident superiority.

Nor was Mr. De Suffrein averse to abide the issue of a contest. He came out of the Bay next morning, and the engagement began at noon with great fury on both sides. To avail himself of his superiority in number, he assailed the last ship in the rear of the British squadron with two of his own, and the two first of its van with five. The attack on the rear was frustrated by the timely assistance of another ship, of which the fire was so violent, that the enemy was completely beaten off. But in the van, where one of the ships they attacked was only of fifty guns, their superiority was more heavily felt. The other ship, after a desperate resistance, was so disabled as to move out of the line ; and that of fifty was compelled to make its way through the fire of the five before she could be assisted.

The center divisions of both squadrons were in the mean while closely engaged. The French ships suffered most, especially in their masts ; several of which were shot away. The conflict continued with equal obstinacy on each side till about seven o'clock in the afternoon, when the French Admi-

ral losing both his mizen and main-mast, and several of their other ships being essentially damaged, they drew off. They received on retreating a severe fire from the British squadron ; but it was not in a condition to pursue them, from the hurt it had itself sustained.

Sir Edward Hughes lay to during the night, intending to recommence the fight next morning ; but, on the return of light, he could discover none of the enemy. They had returned, as soon as it was dark, to Trincomale. They re-entered that harbour in so much confusion, that partly through that cause, as well as from the obscurity of the night, they lost a ship of seventy-four guns.

Their loss of men in this engagement was considerably greater than in the former, amounting to near eleven hundred killed and wounded. It fell in a much larger proportion on the French Admiral's ship than upon any other ; its return of slain and wounded being no less than three hundred and eighty. The same list on board the British squadron was incomparably less, being no more than three hundred and thirty. Among the slain however were three officers of eminent merit as well as rank ; Captains Wat of the Sultan, Wood of the Worcester, and Lumley of the Ifis.

The consequence of the loss of Trincomale was now heavily experienced. While the French lay safely in that harbour, repairing their squadron, Sir Edward Hughes was obliged to bear away to Madras for the same purpose. But here he was assailed by one of the most terrible tempests that was ever known upon that coast, and in which little less than one hundred trading vessels were lost. This calamity occasioned another still greater. The vessels cast away were laden with rice, of which there was an extreme scarcity at Madras, owing to the defect of cultivation, from the distresses and devastations

vastations of the war in the Carnatic. The loss of these vessels increased the scarcity to an absolute famine, which carried off about ten thousand of the inhabitants, before a sufficient supply could arrive from Bengal for their relief.

The continuance of the bad weather, through the setting in of the monsoon, on the coast of Coromandel, compelled Sir Edward Hughes to repair with all expedition to Bombay, where he intended to give his squadron a thorough refitting; but his passage to that settlement was accompanied with a continual boisterousness of weather; and he did not arrive till towards the close of the year. His squadron was so shattered, that in order to repair it with due expedition, he was obliged to distribute it between the dock-yards of Bombay, and the Portuguese settlement of Goa.

In the mean time Sir Richard Bickerton, with a squadron of five ships of the line, was arrived at Bombay from England. He brought near five thousand men for the land service. Not meeting with Sir Edward Hughes there, he proceeded to Madras, where, having put the troops ashore, he returned to Bombay to join him. His voyage from England to Bombay was very favourable; and in his passage from Bombay to Madras, and back again to that place, he had the good fortune to escape the bad weather that had attended Sir Edward Hughes; and both his ships and people were in condition for immediate service.

Four battles had now been fought between Sir Edward Hughes and Mr. de Suffrein in the space of seven months. In the course of no year during this or any preceding war, did two naval commanders meet so frequently in fight, at the head of the same squadrons. Never had so signal and obstinate a competition for the mastery of the Indian ocean been exhibited between any two nations, as that

which now subsisted between the English and the French. Those ancient rivals contended for empire in India, with no less eagerness than they did in Europe. They seemed indeed to consider this part of the globe as that wherein their honour and interests were peculiarly at stake, from the prodigious commercial benefits that would accrue to those who should remain masters of it. The greatness of the objects which they had respectively in view animated them both in the most violent degree; and their reciprocal efforts were principally directed, as far as distance and other circumstances would permit, to this vast and complicated scene of action.

It was however very remarkable at this time, that contrary to former experience and long observation, the behaviour of the French officers did not correspond with that character which they had hitherto borne. Instead of approbation and praises, their commander was perpetually loading them with censure and reprimand for misbehaviour. Several were ignominiously dismissed the service; some remanded home to be tried in France, and six of his captains were sent under arrest to the French islands off the Coast of Africa, for the like causes.

Far different was the conduct and treatment of the British officers; in whose commendation their Admiral was lavish upon every occasion, without one single exception throughout the several engagements that took place. Hence it may not unjustly be inferred, that the accounts published in England, of the different actions with the French in India, however they might appear too favourable to this country, had a just and solid foundation, and were much more worthy of credit than the reports so industriously propagated in France; the authenticity of the first being supported by a proof, which, though collateral, argued powerfully against the veracity of the last.

C H A P. LXIX.

Transactions in the East-Indies.

1872. 1783.

THE French promised themselves, with much reason, a multiplicity of advantages from their squadron's remaining in the proximity of the coast of Coromandel, while the British squadron was compelled to sail round to that of Malabar for the purpose of refitting. In this respect the déprivation of the harbour of Trincomalee was particularly detrimental to the English.

France intended that the next campaign in India should be conspicuously signalized by the immense force she was to display at land as well as at sea, in that part of the world. Exclusive of the French troops already landed on the coast of Coromandel, a body of near five thousand men, all regulars, was to join them from their African islands. They were to be accompanied by several ships of the line, to reinforce M. De Suffrein, whose naval strength, it was then hoped, would, by its great superiority, prove an overmatch for that under Sir Edward Hughes, while their military ashore, through their numbers, and especially the powerful artillery they were to bring into the field, would, in all probability, overcome any resistance.

In order to oppose effectually the designs of the French, which were chiefly directed to the coast of Coromandel, it appeared necessary to make a powerful diversion on the coast of Malabar. This measure had already been adopted during the preceding campaign by the Presidency of Bombay. A strong body of troops, commanded by Colonel Humberstone, had taken Calicut and Panyan, two considerable

rable cities on that coast, besides others of lesser note, and penetrated into the mountainous and difficult inland country in their neighbourhood. Here, having made himself master of a place called Mongarry Cotta, of which the situation commanded the entrance into the inner parts, he proceeded to attack Palacatcherry, a considerable town at some miles distance. But contrary to the hope he had formed of easily mastering it, from the information he had received of its inability to resist him, he found himself suddenly assailed by a numerous enemy, that surrounded his troops on every side : it was with no small difficulty they could extricate themselves, nor without the loss of their provisions and baggage.

Intelligence arriving at Bombay, of the motions of Colonel Humberstone, apprehending that the attempts he was now making, required a greater force than that of which he was possessed, the Presidency dispatched General Mathews to his assistance, with a large re-inforcement. The Colonel's strength, in the mean while, was not adequate to the making of any effectual stand against the superior force that was advancing against him under Tippoo Saib ; who used such diligence, that Colonel Humberstone had only time to make good his retreat to Panyan, where he found Colonel Macleod, who now assumed the command.

The situation of Panyan, on the sea coast, enabled two frigates to come to the assistance of the British troops. Their fire, together with that from the works which the troops had thrown up ashore, rendered the repeated attempts of the enemy to force them entirely fruitless. This resistance was seconded by several vigorous sallies, wherein the enemy suffered considerably.

The force under Tippoo Saib consisted of near thirty thousand men, ten thousand of whom were horse,

horse. His infantry was the best disciplined of his army ; and he was accompanied by Mr. Lally with a large body of French. At the head of this formidable strength, Tippoo Saib's spirit would not suffer him to refrain from making a general effort against the British troops. He assailed their lines accordingly with his whole force. His attack was conducted with equal regularity and resolution : Both he and the French commander exerted themselves personally with uncommon bravery. But, after a fierce and bloody dispute, his people were completely repulsed. The success obtained by the British troops was so great and decisive, that Tippoo Saib abandoned the siege of Panyan, and withdrew to the other side of the river of that name,

General Mathews, who was hastening to the aid of Colonel Humberstone, on being apprized of this transaction, and deeming his situation no longer dangerous, resolved to carry the war into the heart of Hyder Ally's dominions ; judging this the most direct measure to compel him to relinquish the defence of such as were more distant, and which would thereby lie open to invasion. To this intent he brought the forces under his command before the city of Onore, situated about three hundred miles to the south of Bombay, and one of the principal places in the country of Canaree. It was taken by assault with great slaughter, and plundered, with circumstances of avarice and rapine, that were highly disgraceful to the victors ; among whom, at the same time, great discontents arose concerning the distribution of the spoil.

The death of Hyder Ally happening about this period, which was the close of eighty-two and opening of eighty-three, had excited the greatest expectations in his enemies of being able to profit by this event. The Presidency of Bombay, in consequence of it, sent orders to General Mathews to proceed

proceed with all the force he could collect into the country of Canaree, in order to gain possession of Bednore, the capital; by which means the treasures of Hyder Ally, which were reputed immense, would fall into his hands, together with all his magazines for war. The Council of Bombay, among other motives, was partly determined to this measure, by the discontents which were said to prevail in that country, and the disinclination of the generality of the inhabitants to submit to any government but their own.

After having forced their way through the passages in the mountains that form the frontiers of this country, the British army advanced towards Bednore, which now bore the name of Hyder Nagur, or the city of Hyder, by order of that prince, one of the most spacious and magnificent places in India. As it was incapable of resistance, it was delivered up to the English by the Governor, together with Hyder Ally's treasures, and the remainder of the whole province, of which it was the capital, on condition, that all private property should be secure, and that he himself should continue to govern it under them, as he had done under Hyder Ally.

On the surrender of Bednore, which took place in the beginning of February eighty-three, the British General imprisoned the Indian Governor, in direct violation of the articles of capitulation; and committed various irregularities, which gave great offence to his principal officers. His conduct, it is said, became altogether so destitute of prudence and propriety, that three of them left him, and returned to Bombay: These were Colonels Macleod and Humberstone, and Major Shaw. They belonged to the King's troops, and were men of known honour and bravery.

General Mathews, on the other hand, charged both

both them, and all others under his command, with disrespect and licentiousness ; and complained, that their mutinous disposition and the unruly behaviour, of which they were guilty, threatened the most dangerous consequences.

On the examination of those charges, and of the answers that were made to them ; and upon a long enquiry into the conduct of General Mathews, he was suspended from the command of the army, and it was conferred on Colonel Macleod.

During these proceedings at Bombay, a detachment from the forces under General Mathews invaded and subdued several places on the neighbouring coast. Among these was Mangalore, the principal seaport and marine arsenal of Hyder Ally. It was carried, after some resistance ; but the fort held out with so much obstinacy, that General Mathews was obliged to besiege it in form with the major part of his troops. By its surrender on the ninth of March, an end was put to the project of setting up for a maritime power, which Hyder Ally had formed and brought into a considerable state of maturity ; a number of stout ships, three of which were of the line, being already far advanced in their construction.

The loss of Mangalore was an object of much concern to Tippoo Saib, who had succeeded to his father's designs, as well as his power. He prepared immediately to march against the British forces in the Bednore country, and collected for that purpose all the troops he had in the Carnatic ; resolving to relinquish this entirely, however mortifying it might be to give it up, after so much toil and struggle to keep it, rather than to part with a province which his father had made the seat of his empire, and his favourite residence.

The army, with which Tippoo Saib was advancing to the rescue of his capital, consisted of above one

one hundred thousand men. The force which General Mathews had to oppose him amounted only to between two and three thousand, of whom six or seven hundred were Europeans. It had been expected by the most judicious officers with him, that, on being apprised of the multitudes that were approaching, he would have posted himself at the passes on the mountains leading down to the sea-coast, where, it was thought, he might have effectually protected his late conquests; but, contrary to all the rules of prudence, he marched out of Bednore, and gave battle to Tippoo Saib in an open plain.

The result of his temerity was, that, after a short contest, his handful of men was totally routed, with great slaughter; and he was obliged, with the broken remains of his small force, to take shelter in the fortresses, that stood upon an eminence near the town. Here they were immediately invested on every side. After sustaining a siege of near three weeks, wherein many were slain and wounded, and being much reduced otherwise, through illness and constant fatigue, the enemy's artillery having at the same time destroyed most of their defences, they offered at length to capitulate.

The terms which they obtained from Tippoo Saib, were the security of their private property, on delivering up to him all public, and that they should be conducted in safety to Bombay.

But these conditions depriving the garrison of the immense booty it had acquired by the taking of Bednore, a determination was taken to elude them if possible. To this purpose the treasure that had been found in the fortress was divided among the garrison, and nothing left to the conqueror, to whom it belonged by right of capitulation. But this contrivance was quickly discovered, and being interpreted

Interpreted by Tippoo Saib as an infraction of the agreement made on the part of the garrison, he resolved, from that moment, to consider the articles of the capitulation as annulled by this breach of faith.

In consequence of this resolution, the General and all his officers and men were put under confinement, and stripped of all they possessed. After suffering many indignities, they were sent, loaded with irons, to a fort up the country, where they endured a long imprisonment, accompanied with much ill-treatment and misery.

The fate of their unfortunate General has been variously reported. Both he and several of his officers were, it is said, put to death with circumstances of great cruelty.

The fidelity of the Sepoys, and their affectionate behaviour to their European fellow-sufferers, during their common captivity, has been highly extolled by those who were witnesses of it, and represented as the noblest proof they ever gave of the sincerity of their attachment to the service and interest of those whose party they had embraced.

While this unhappy garrison was blocked up in the fort, to which they had retired after the loss of the battle their commander had so rashly hazarded, Tippoo Saib had dispatched large detachments from his army, to seize the passes in the mountains. Such a panic had struck those who guarded them, on hearing of the army's defeat at Bednore, that they were easily occupied by Tippoo Saib's troops. This terror was quickly communicated to the neighbouring garrisons. Cundapore, a place of great strength and importance, was immediately abandoned; and Onore, a post of still greater consequence, would have been relinquished in the like manner, had not Captain Torriano's intrepidity revived

revived the courage of his men, and recalled them to their duty.

The Success of his arms in recovering possession of his capital, in forcing the passes, and retaking several places along the coast, encouraged Tippoo Saib to lay siegue to Mangalore, in many respects the most important town he had lost on the coast of Malabar. He surrounded it with his whole army, while the operations of the siegue were carried on by the French troops that had accompanied him from the Carnatic. By their exertions the garrison was reduced to great extremity, notwithstanding the gallant defence made by Major Campbell, and the bravery of the troops he commanded.

They were relieved at last from the toils and dangers of their situation, by the news that arrived in the month of July of the general peace. It proved a very unwelcome intelligence to Tippoo Saib, who now hoped in a few days to have been master of Mangalore; but was instantly forced to give up all such expectation; the French commander acquainting him, that his orders were to act no longer against the English.

This was a severe disappointment to Tippoo Saib. He expressed great impatience and indignation at being abandoned by allies on whom he had been taught to place so much reliance, and who now deserted him in the midst of an enterprize, in which they knew he could not succeed without their co-operation.

Such were the complaints of Tippoo Saib. It has even been said, that his resentment carried him so far, that he was on the point of using compulsion with the French, and forcing them to continue the operations of the siegue. Certain it is, that both he and they parted upon unfriendly terms. His displeasure was much heightened by the necessity he was under of dropping the prosecution of the siegue.

siege of Mangalore; of which he did not regain the possession till the ensuing year; when it was restored to him, with other places on the Coast of Malabar, at the pacification that took place between him and the East-India Company.

During these transactions on the Coast of Malabar, no less a variety of military operations was carrying on along the Coast of Coromandel. From the time that Sir Eyre Coote left the command to General Stuart, to the close of the year eighty-two, this officer was employed in observing the motions of the enemy, and preventing them from becoming masters of several places at which they were directed. Relying on the goodness of his troops, he frequently sought to bring them to action; but notwithstanding their vast superiority, and the assistance of their French allies, they constantly declined it.

In the beginning of the season for action, the Governor and Council of Bengal determined to send an ample supply to the Presidency of Madras, in order to enable them to put a final and successful termination to the war, which Tippoo Saib seemed no less intent on prosecuting than his father had been. Sir Eyre Coote, who had for the benefit of his health gone by sea to Bengal, was now entrusted by them with a large sum of money, with which he embarked for Madras. But when he had almost reached his destination, he found himself in danger of being taken by two French men of war of the line. They chased him forty-eight hours; during which the solicitude and fatigue he underwent in continuing almost the whole time upon deck, occasioned a relapse into his former illness. He came safe into port, but died two days after his landing.

The loss of this illustrious General was deeply lamented. It happened at a juncture when his abilities

ties were greatly needed. The most flattering expectations had been formed, that he would have compleated in the course of this campaign what he had so happily begun, and brought so much forward during the two last. His reputation was so well established, and had been carried so high by the brilliancy of his exploits during that period, that an unbounded confidence was placed in his military talents, and he was reputed by friends and foes as great a commander as ever appeared in India.

In the mean time, as the invasion of his principal dominions had compelled Tippoo Saib to hasten with all speed to their rescue, General Stuart seized that opportunity to attack him in another quarter. On the former's leaving the Carnatic, a large force was sent under Colonel Fullarton to invade the province of Coimbatour. The success of this officer was great and rapid. He over-ran the enemy's country, taking several places of strength and consequence, and making an alarming diversion on this side of Tippoo Saib's dominions, while he was engaged so warmly and so dangerously in the center of them, and on the coast of Malabar.

The great operations that General Stuart had in view, obliged him to recall this officer in the midst of his successes. Though the retreat of Tippoo Saib from the Carnatic was an event of essential importance, and might be justly considered as a deliverance from the most formidable of all their enemies; yet the Presidency of Madras did not look upon this advantage as complete, while a powerful body of French remained possesst of so strong a hold in their neighbourhood as Cuddalore. It was now become their principal place of arms. As they did not propose, after the departure of that prince, to face the English in the field, they had employed their whole attention in fortifying it to the

the utmost. Herein they had succeeded so well, that the besieging of it was considered as a very hazardous attempt, especially as the garrison was extremely numerous, and composed of as good troops as any in France; being what the French style old corps, chosen and hardy veterans, equally brave and expert in their profession.

Nor were they alone in this service. A number of Tippoo Saib's best troops were left with them. They were at the same time plentifully provided with warlike stores, and all other necessaries; and had an artillery such as was never yet seen in India.

Previous to General Stuart's commencing the siege of Cuddalore, which was about the beginning of June, they had constructed strong lines of defence in the front of the place, one part only excepted, which was occupied by a thick wood, which they looked upon as impenetrable. But the British General was of another opinion, and began immediately, on his arrival before the town, to prepare to make his way through it. Upon which they thought it necessary to continue the lines they had begun, quite across the neck which separates the town from the Continent.

As the besieged carried on this work with uncommon expedition, General Stuart resolved immediately to attack it before they proceeded any further, judging, that when compleated, it would require immense exertions to master it by a regular and progressive approach.

To this purpose a vigorous attempt was made upon their lines, under the direction of General Bruce. Several of their batteries on a rising ground were carried, and turned against them, by the corps under Colonel Kelly. The grenadiers of the British army, who all acted upon this occasion, endeavoured with great bravery to avail themselves of

the protection of these batteries, to take possession of a redoubt, the fire of which annoyed them greatly; but they met with so firm a reception, that it was found necessary, after a long and violent contest, to call in the line of reserve, and to change the method of attack.

The whole morning had been spent in cannonading the enemy's works, without making any impression upon them. It was now therefore determined to try the issue of an assault. The grenadiers, headed by Colonel Cathcart, and the reserve by Colonels Gordon and Stuart, advanced to the French lines, through the heaviest fire of musquetry, cannon and grape-shot, that both they, and their General, from their own acknowledgment, had ever experienced. They entered the enemy's intrenchments, who received them at the point of their bayonets. With this weapon alone both parties now engaged, and did dreadful execution upon each other. But the French, who were continually supported by their own people from the town, overpowered at length the British troops. These however retreated in firm order, maintaining the fight with no less resolution than the enemy, who followed them out of their lines, in hopes of breaking them entirely. But the desperate stand made by these suddenly changed the fortune of the day. Another division of the British troops perceiving the French had quitted their works, turned their flanks, and took possession of their principal redoubt. Those British troops in the mean while, which had at first retreated, repulsed in their turn the enemy, who had followed them, and who, seeing the English masters of the redoubt, retired immediately into the town. The effect produced by this success was, that the French gave up the defence of the works they had been at such pains to construct without the body of the place, to which they

they now were wholly confined. The loss on the side of the assailants amounted to near one thousand killed and wounded; among the former were Major Varrenius of the Hanoverians, and Captain Lindsay of the British grenadiers, who fell at the head of their men in the first attack of the enemy's intrenchments. Near one half of the list consisted of Europeans; the greatest proportion ever yet known in that part of the world. Of the French themselves, though fighting under the protection of their lines, not less than six hundred were slain or wounded; and of these, more than forty were officers. What made this loss the more considerable, it consisted almost wholly of their French troops.

While General Stuart pressed the town of Cuddalore by land, Sir Edward Hughes lay off the harbour, to cut off its communication by sea. His fleet had lately suffered a great diminution of men from the scurvy. The violence and contagion of the disorder had made it necessary to set numbers of them ashore, for the preservation of their lives. Of this M. de Suffrein being apprised, resolved to encounter him before they were sufficiently recovered to return to their duty.

In order to give such a decisive superiority in number of men to M. De Suffrein, as might enable him at once to board the British squadron, M. de Bussy, who commanded at Cuddalore, sent him twelve hundred of his best troops. Thus provided, it was thought the French Admiral would not hesitate to close in upon the English; who, though seventeen of the line strong, which was two more than he had, were so weakly manned, from the cause already assigned, that the real advantage in point of strength, lay entirely on his side.

On the twentieth of June, M. De Suffrein approached the British squadron in order of battle. Sir Edward Hughes drew up in the same manner.

The engagement began at four in the afternoon, and lasted three hours; but the French preserved a distance the more surprizing, as they knew the circumstances the English were in; by whom it was fully expected, that they would have neared them sufficiently for the closest fighting.

The enemy retired in the night to Pondicherry, whither Sir Edward Hughes followed them. After having again proffered them battle, which they did not chuse to accept, he made for Madras, in order to land his sick and wounded, and take on board those who were recovered. The loss in killed and wounded in the British squadron amounted to five hundred and thirty; but that of the French, tho' it could not be precisely ascertained, exceeded it considerably.

Thus ended the naval operations between the English and French in the East-Indies. In no part of the globe did both these nations engage with so much frequency and eagerness, nor lose so many brave officers and seamen in proportion to their shipping.

In the mean time, General Stuart felt a daily diminution of his strength before Cuddalore, partly through illness as well as through the chances of war. The besieged, who were well informed of his situation, concerted a project, by which they fully confided to make him raise the siege, if not to give him a total defeat. A body of near four thousand men was landed from their squadron; which, added to the troops in the place, was esteemed a force completely adequate to the design proposed.

The execution of it was committed to the Chevalier De Damas, an experienced and valiant officer. On the twenty-fifth of June, at the head of the regiment of Aquitaine, reported one of the best in the French service, and of which he was Colonel, and

and other troops selected from the bravest in the garrison, he sallied out by break of day upon the besiegers.

The British officers then commanding the trenches, were Colonels Gordon and Cathcart, and Major Cotgrove. As the attack was made in the dark, the French threw the British troops into some confusion at first, and took a pair of colours belonging to a corps of Sepoys. This success was but momentary. The enemy were soon faced in such a manner, as to be repulsed and broken every where; and compelled, after a vigorous resistance, to give way. They were so warmly pressed, that their commander, the Chevalier De Damas, was taken with about two hundred of his countrymen, and about as many were slain.

This transaction was attended with one of the most remarkable circumstances that happened during the whole war. A corps of Sepoy grenadiers encountered the French troops opposed to them with fixed bayonets, and overcame them. An action so striking was not only noticed with due applause, but procured that corps a more solid remuneration, a provision for themselves and their families, by the Presidencies to whose department they belonged. The only loss of consequence was that of Major Cotgrove, by whose example and conduct, these brave Indians were animated to behave in so extraordinary a manner.

The arrival of the news that peace was concluded by the belligerent powers in Europe, put an end to hostilities between their subjects in India, which had been as considerable a theatre of this extensive and destructive war, and had produced as great a variety of important events, and astonishing vicissitudes of fortune, as any other quarter of the globe.

C H A P. LXX.

Independence of the United States recognised by the Dutch.—Transactions in America.—Provisional Treaty with the Colonies—Ships Lost at Sea.

1782,

THE capture of Mr. Laurens, the late President of the Congress, when upon his voyage to Holland, and his subsequent detention in London, occasioned the busines of his missiion from the United States of America to devolve into the hands of Mr. John Adams, a gentleman of the province of Massachuset, of acknowledged abilities.

He executed his commission with great diligence and sagacity. His first public step was the famous memorial presented to the States General in April eighty-one, asserting the rectitude of the American declaration of independence, together with the propriety of a strict amity and correspondence, and a firm union of interests between the United States of America and the Republic of Holland.

Having, by a variety of arguments and infinuations, prepared the minds of the Duteh for a favourable acceptance of the proposals he brought from his countrymen, he presented his second memorial to the States General in the ensuing month of January. It produced the desired effect. The seyen provinces of the Union having, in their seveal assemblies taken it into consideration, directed their respective deputies at the Hague, to concur in admitting Mr. Adams as minister plenipotentiary from the United States of America. This admission took place in the month of April eighty-two,

The success of Mr. Adams in this negociation was highly acceptable to Congress. But it added, in fact, no great strength to the Confederacy; and was

was resented by Great Britain in a manner, which made numbers of the soundest judges of the interests of Holland, declare that country had widely erred from the track it ought to have pursued in the present juncture.

Exclusive of the losses and humiliations which the Dutch had already experienced in consequence of that measure in the East and West-Indies, as well as on their own coast, they were exposed, during the course of this year, to a variety of insults and depredations in Africa, where many of their forts and settlements on the coast of Guinea fell into the hands of the English, to their great disgrace, and diminution of credit among the princes and nations of that extensive country.

The progress of the confederacy against Great Britain availed them but little. They seemed in some measure pointed out as the people upon whom its vengeance was to fall heaviest every where. This indeed was in the eye of politicians no more than what they were to expect from a state, which, of all others, they ought to have considered, on account of its proximity, strength and interest, as their surest and most natural ally; with which, from their situation in the system of Europe, they ought to have preserved the sincerest connexion, and from which, as they were always at hand to receive the most powerful and ready support, they were by that reason to apprehend the severest treatment for espousing the cause of its enemies.

They had little at the present to promise themselves from the formidable combination against their old ally. Admiral Rodney's victory over the whole naval force of France in the West-Indies, had so completely broken, and disconcerted the plans and designs of that power, that it seemed to have given up all ideas of annoying Great Britain in that quarter.

After that terrible defeat, instead of endeavouring to collect into one point of force the yet considerable remains of their vanquished fleet, the French appeared to be rather taken up with projects of a secondary nature, such as might distress partial branches of commerce, and annoy individuals, rather than contribute to any essential detriment of their enemy.

Of this nature was the expedition to Hudson's Bay, undertaken by a ship of seventy-four guns, and two frigates of thirty-six, under the direction of M. Delaperouse. They sailed to that remote and inhospitable region with a body of regulars and a train of artillery, as if the resistance to be expected demanded any preparation of that consequence.

The fact was, that they met with no other opposition than what arose from the nature of the climate; rocks of ice at sea, with dreary and untraversed wastes at land. Wherever they could penetrate, the few scores of commercial individuals, who occupied these frozen climes, in the name of the Hudson's Bay Company, surrendered their dwellings to them at the first summons. The loss to that Company was estimated at some hundred thousand pounds.

The only action worth recording on this occasion was the humanity with which the French commander spared a sufficient quantity of provisions and stores of all kinds, for the use of those English who had withdrawn into the interior part of the country on his approach, and who, he knew, must on his departure have perished for want of them.

This leads one naturally to observe, that of all the wars recorded in ancient or modern history, the last was most conspicuously marked with generous and humane passages. However dreadful and destructive in other respects, it shewed to what a degree of refinement

refinement in nobleness of sentiments, and real civilization, the present age has risen over all the preceding.

While France was discharging its resentment on these sequestered and forlorn settlements, Spain was engaged in prosecutions of the same kind in the more southern latitudes. The Governor of the Havannah, Don Juan de Cagigal, projected an invasion of the Bahama Islands. At the head of five thousand men, he attacked the isle of Providence, of which the garrison did not consist of more than three hundred and sixty. The conquest of such a place could not be difficult, and was only worthy being noticed for the liberal treatment which the garrison and inhabitants experienced from the captors, in the terms of capitulation granted to them.

The Spaniards had also taken possession of some places in the Bay of Honduras, and on the Muzquito shore. But the Bay men, assisted by their faithful negroes, a race of men long attached to them through kind usage, retook some of them with great valour. A little army was formed in conjunction with the Indians in those parts, whose enmity to the Spaniards has been inveterate and hereditary ever since the discovery of America. Headed by Colonel Despard, they attacked and carried the posts on Black River, where they made about eight hundred of the Spanish troops prisoners of war.

During these transactions on the southern Continent of America, the British Colonies in the north were now enjoying the near prospect of a termination of all their sufferings, and the fullest attainment of that political situation for which they had so warmly contended.

General Carlton, who had succeeded Sir Henry Clinton in the command of the British army in America, informed General Washington, about the commencement

commencement of May, of the resolutions taken by Parliament to forward an accommodation with the Colonies, and of the power invested in the Crown to conclude a general peace or truce with Congress, or a separate one with any of the States in particular. To accelerate these purposes he demanded a passport for Mr. Morgan his secretary, granting him permission to repair to Congress.

General Washington referring this request to that body, it passed a resolution in the negative. The idea of a general, or a separate negotiation with Great Britain, or of any treaty without the participation of France, was rejected with much warmth by the various provinces of the union. They unanimously concurred in declaring, that no accommodation should take place that was not founded on the general consent of the United States, and conformably to the stipulations made with their allies. The state of Pennsylvania, in particular, resolved, that whoever agreed to a separate treaty with Great Britain, should be reputed foes to the union; and that any proffers on the part of Great Britain to the prejudice of their alliance with France, ought to be rejected with scorn. It even passed a declaration that Congress itself possessed no right to frame any act tending to abrogate the supreme authority and independence of any province of the union.

In conformity to these sentiments, Congress declared at the same time, that no amicable conference could be held with any commissioners from Britain, without a preliminary acknowledgment of the independency of America, or withdrawing its fleets and armies from that country.

In order to preclude all hope of compassing any separate treaty, Congress strongly recommended that a watchful eye should be kept against the entrance of emissaries from Britain into the United States

States; that no individuals coming among them under flags of truce, should be allowed any communication with the inhabitants not relating to the business that brought them; and even that no person coming from any part of the British dominions, should, while the war lasted, have admission into any of the United States.

In the mean time, however, the work of peace was proceeding forward in Europe with great expedition. The British ministry, which had the pacification with the Colonies most at heart, came to a provisional settlement with the American commissioners, so early as the end of November eighty-two.

By this agreement, which was to be definitive between Britain and America, as soon as that between the former and France could be concluded, Great Britain relinquished all rights of sovereignty over the Thirteen United Colonies, and acknowledged their independence in the fullest and most explicit terms. The boundaries between the respective territories of the contracting parties were settled in the most circumstantial manner. All those vast regions included between Nova Scotia and Canada, the five great lakes, and the river Mississippi, were ceded to the United States of America. The fishery on the Banks of Newfoundland, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and all other places upon the American coast, to be enjoyed in common by Britain and America.

When the session of Parliament was opened on the fifth of December, much altercation took place on account of this provisional treaty. It was complained, that an irrevocable and unconditional recognition of American independency had been made, without a sufficient compensation for so liberal and vast a concession. It was urged, that by this measure the honour and interest of the kingdom in America had been abandoned in a manner

unworthy

unworthy of the spirit and magnanimity which had so long characterised the British nation.

To the first of these objections it was answered that the acknowledgment of the independence of America was so entirely connected with the treaty depending between Great Britain and France, that were this latter to refuse equitable conditions of peace, the provisional treaty with America would necessarily become void.

To the second objection it was replied, that when the terms upon which the pacification in view was to take place, were duly and impartially investigated, it would fully appear that no concession had been made derogatory to the dignity of the British nation. Its welfare had been properly consulted, and every arrangement taken to obviate all reasonable complaints on that account.

A variety of other discussions relating to this subject employed the abilities of the new ministry and its opponents: but though they were conducted, as usual, with much warmth, and not a little acrimony, yet the main object itself was of too much importance to be affected by any collateral considerations: all parties concurred in the persuasion that no impediment should be thrown in the way of peace.

The like sentiments prevailed among the enemies of Great Britain. They had now waged a five years war in conjunction. Though they came fresh into the quarrel, that was then risen to its height between her and America, still this advantage had not availed them. Notwithstanding the incumbrances with which Great Britain was loaded, deprived of her Colonies, and detrimented by subsequent losses, she yet had proved strong enough to resist them.—Her strength and her resources seemed yet in a vigorous condition. The spirit of her councils was unimpaired, and her people, however divided among them-

themselves in regard to the American war, continued inflexibly resolute in the determination to face all other enemies.

These considerations could not fail having due weight when laid in the balance against their own circumstances. France, the great pillar of the confederacy against Britain, began to feel an alarming diminution at home of the means to maintain it on a strong and efficient footing. The expences of the war lay heaviest upon her, as she had not only her own fleets and armies to support, but was called upon by America for pecuniary, as well as other supplies. Her trade had materially suffered in the beginning of the rupture; and the many individuals whose affairs had been essentially injured at this period, had not yet recovered from their embarrassments. She had been compelled, in order to stand her ground, to make great reformations in many departments, and to suppress a multitude of places hitherto esteemed necessary for the splendor and dignity of the French court. With all these exertions and sacrifices, she still experienced perpetual failures in every attempt of consequence. Even in the European seas, though assisted by the whole naval power of Spain, she had not been able to make any impression on the coast or the marine of Britain, or to prevent the usual and established course of its commerce. Her credit of late began to totter in the apprehension of the shrewdest and best informed. The Americans were frequently complaining of the tardiness of her remittances, and ascribing many of the disasters that attended them to her deficiencies in that particular.

Spain, the other great member of the confederacy, was considered by the most intelligent, as having acted a part upon this occasion totally inconsistent with the maxims she ought to have adopted respecting America. She saw an empire arising in

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the north of that hemisphere, of which the prosperity and greatness were evidently incompatible with the safety of her vast possessions in that portion of the globe. The soundest politicians were, as they still continue, uniformly of this opinion. But in this, as in many other instances, the interest of the Spanish nation gave way to ministerial intrigues. The recovery of Jamaica in the new world, and of Minorca in the old, and above all, of Gibraltar, was described as a compensation that would amply repay the trouble and expence that might be occasioned by uniting with France in support of the British Colonies. This measure was held out as one that would be attended with little difficulty, when jointly and vigorously pursued by the collective power of France and Spain. Allured by these motives, and swayed, no doubt, by a regard for the Family Compact, the Spanish Court entered into this combination against Great Britain, without fully perceiving its dangerous tendency. The capture of Minorca had lately revived the spirits of the Spanish nation; but they were soon after much more depressed by the failure of their arms before Gibraltar. This, with the relief of that fortress in the face and defiance of the whole naval strength of the House of Bourbon, together with the preceding defeat of the noblest fleet that France had ever sent to the West Indies, were events that convinced the ministry of Spain how erroneously it had been led to expect that the humiliation of Great Britain would be a work of facility, in the difficult circumstances wherein she was involved by the dispute with her refractory Colonies.

Holland, the last member of the confederacy in point of power, as well as of time, was that which was now most desirous to see the quarrel terminated. Never had that state exhibited such features of debility as at the present. Its arsenals at home were empty, and

and its dependencies abroad in no circumstances of defence. The remembrance of the past glories of that famous and formerly potent republic was all that now remained. It was with secret pleasure that its ancient enemies now viewed it severed through their machinations from its old and natural ally. Instead of that honourable and independent part it was wont to take among contending kings and nations, it was now, through the imprudence of some, and the time-serving venality of others, reduced to act in subserviency part to those two powers precisely, from which it had been used to experience the greatest affronts and mortifications, and had been treated in the days of their respective triumphs and prosperities, with all manner of tyranny and oppression. As it now depended entirely upon France for the protection of its foreign possessions, so it was, of course, implicitly guided by the directions of the French ministry in all the measures adopted by its government. In this precarious and fallen state, the Dutch could not strictly be said to have a will of their own, and could only be considered as the passive instruments of France.

Such were the reciprocal situations of the various belligerent powers towards the close of the year eighty-two; by which it appears, that however great their ambition, or keen their resentments, they were all equally desirous of peace, of which it was indeed difficult to decide which of them stood most in need.

Among the various events which marked the latter season of this memorable year, was the loss by storms at sea of some of the largest ships in the British navy. They were five in number, and part of a convoy that accompanied a large fleet of merchantmen from Jamaica; numbers of which perished on the same occasion. Four of these five ships carried seventy-four guns, and one of them a

hundred and ten; this was the Ville de Paris, the noblest naval trophy ever won in battle from an enemy. Of the complement of this and another ship, the Glorieux, also a prize taken on the famous twelfth of April, only one man had the singular good fortune to escape to tell their melancholy fate. The people of the Ramilies were saved by the merchantmen in company; and those of the Hector by accidentally falling in with a vessel when their own was on the point of sinking.

The fortune of the Hector was in every respect striking. Her condition was so bad on her leaving Jamaica, that she could only mount fifty guns instead of seventy-four, and she had but a third of her crew. After parting company with the fleet, from her inability to keep up with it, she fell in with two French frigates of the largest size, on their way to North America. They carried each forty-four guns, and three hundred men, and had a number of officers and soldiers on board, who were going to join the French troops on that continent.

The condition of the Hector was too visible to escape their observation. They attacked her vigorously, not imagining she could make any effectual resistance. The action continued four hours; during which, from her disabled state, she could not exert herself to any advantage, and lay continually exposed to the raking fire of the enemy. But the intrepidity of her people supplied all deficiencies. Captain Bourchier, who commanded her, being grievously wounded, Captain Drury succeeded him, and behaved with equal gallantry. Both officers and men concurred in making the noblest defence that has ever been recorded of people in parallel circumstances. Surprised at this unexpected opposition, the French commanders, who clearly perceived the smallness of their numbers,

bers, made an endevour to board them, but were repulsed with so much resolution, that they lost all hope of mastering them, and drew off, to the great surprize of the English, who fought much more from a point of honour, than from any expectation of frustrating the enemy's attempt against a ship that was already a wreck, and could not have been preserved had they taken her.

The tempestuous weather that followed, found her so shattered, that she was utterly unable to stand it. After making every effort to save her that human industry and perseverance could produce, water and provisions failing, and the men falling dead through the incessant labour that was requisite to keep the ship from going down, a vessel was happily descried making towards them. The Captain's name was John Hill, whose noble behaviour on this occasion well deserves commemoration. Though his own vessel was but a snow, he took on board the whole remaining company of the Hector, amounting to upwards of two hundred men; throwing part of his cargo overboard, to accommodate them with sufficient room, and generously sharing his provisions with them, to the imminent hazard of being reduced to want them himself. This danger was so real, and he was so near experiencing the calamity to which he had exposed himself, that the last cask of water was broached on the day that land was discovered.

But the fate of the Centaur, Captain Inglefield, was much more lamentable. After enduring the fury of one of the most dreadful storms that ever was remembered, and striving with unavailing efforts to preserve her, only twelve of the ship's company were able to save themselves from the severe destiny of the others, who were all drowned. They fortunately got into the only remaining boat; in which, through innumerable perils and distresses,

they traversed the space of near eight hundred miles in the Atlantic ocean, without compass or quadrant, and with a blanket for a sail. Their food consisted of two biscuits divided among them every twenty-four hours: their drink during the same space, of as much water to every man as the neck of a wine bottle broken off would hold.

Captain Inglefield's behaviour in this deplorable situation was accompanied with a calmness and fortitude that contributed effectually to keep up the spirit and resolution of his companions. Instead of giving the least countenance to grief and despondency, he animated them by the cheerfulness of his own deportment; and to chace away the gloom that might accrue from too much silence and pensiveness, he prevailed upon them to entertain each other every evening with songs and stories,

This dreadful trial lasted fifteen days; at the expiration of which, when the last division of water and biscuit had been made, and all hopes were fled, to their inexpressible joy they discovered land. This was the Portuguese island of Fayal, where they had the happiness to land safely that night.

C H A P. LXXI.

Parliamentary Debates on the Treaty of Peace.

1782. 1783.

THE provisional treaty with America, though containing a multiplicity of concessions to the Colonists, was generally approved by all parties.—The temper of the nation had so long been soured by that contest, and by the repeated and fruitless endeavours to bring it to a favourable issue, that people were become averse even to the very discussion of the subject, and heartily desirous to resign the Americans to their own management, in the fullest latitude they could require.

For this reason the articles of that treaty met with almost an implicit approbation. The treaty itself, though it dismembered the British empire, was considered as a deliverance from endless perplexity.—The people of America were now converted from the best and warmest of friends, into the most rancorous and inveterate foes. The conduct of their rulers exhibited on every occasion the most unequivocal proofs of an irreconcilable disposition. Peace was an object to which they were inclined in common with their allies from mere necessity but it was clear, by the whole tenour of their conduct, that resentment and vengeance were the prevailing maxims throughout the American continent.

In the full conviction that such were the inclinations of the Americans, the people of Great Britain were become almost indifferent to a connection, which they were clearly satisfied could not be founded on sincerity; and deemed it sufficient for their

own interest that a pacification should take place at the present between both parties, leaving to future contingencies the renewal of their ancient friendship.

But while they consented with so much willingness and facility to the demands of America, they beheld with a jealous and disapproving eye the advantages resulting to France from the preliminary treaty concluded with the ministers of that Court on the twentieth of January, eighty-three.

By the articles of that treaty the French acquired, together with the isles of St. Pierre and Miquelon, an extensive tract of sea for their fishery, stretching from Cape St. John, upon the eastern coast of Newfoundland, round the north part of it, to Cape Ray, on its western side.

France restored to Great Britain all her acquisitions during the war, in the West Indies, excepting Tobago, which the latter ceded to her, restoring at the same time St. Lucia.

On the coast of Africa cession was made to France of all the forts and settlements on the river Senegal, and in the neighbouring parts; for which France returned those on the river Gambia.

The restorations to France in the East Indies were the most considerable, being all the places she had lost during the war, to which were added some considerable districts near them. In this part of the world France had no equivalent to restore.

The most remarkable article of this treaty was that one by which Great Britain consented that the stipulations concerning Dunkirk, formerly made at the peace of Utrecht, should be annulled, and that France should be at liberty to dispose of that place in any manner she might think proper.

The treaty with Spain did not meet with more approbation than that with France. Besides Minorca in Europe, and West Florida in America, already taken by the Spanish arms, East Florida was

was yielded to that crown ; for which the Bahamas, already retaken by the English, were the only return.

These treaties underwent a strict and severe examination in both Houses of Parliament. Four hundred and fifty members were present in the House of Commons, on the day appointed to take them into consideration.

The abilities of Ministry and Opposition were carried on this occasion to their fullest extent. The attack and defence of the peace called forth their respective exertions in a manner that had seldom been precedented, either in variety and copiousness, or in strength and animation of argument.

It was asserted on the part of Ministry, that the critical situation of pecuniary affairs in this country demanded an immediate termination of the war. The national debt was now risen to the enormous sum of two hundred and fifty millions ; for which an interest of near nine millions and a half was annually paid. This interest, together with the civil list, and peace establishment, would swell the national expences to little less than fifteen millions a-year, of which near two millions and a half were to be raised by additional taxes ; those already existing falling short that sum.

Our enemies, it had been said, were in a still worse condition in that respect ; but allowing the truth of that assertion, the difference of government militated so much in their favour, that granting they would incur great distresses by prosecuting the war, we should experience much greater, were a public bankruptcy to ensue. The popular maxims of our constitution would throw us into universal confusion, while the habitual submission to the supreme authority of the State, would, in the midst of their hardships and sufferings, keep them in tranquillity and order.

To these allegations Opposition replied, that it was now many years since a variety of speculations had been made upon the public funds in this country. It had been predicted more than half a century ago, that they could not with safety be extended beyond the limits at which they stood at that period. Very wise and ingenious men had reasoned against their increase in that style. Even Sir Robert Walpole, an able calculator, seemed to coincide with that opinion. But experience had shewn the futility of all these apprehensions. True it was our burthens were heavy ; but they were borne with an acquiescence far superior to that which was found among the subjects of the inimical powers. In America, the various states composing the union were full of discontents on account of the taxes laid upon them. Not only the commonalty, but their very rulers declared against them, most of the provincial assemblies having refused to pay the last assessment ordered by Congress. In Spain, the people were known to be extremely averse to that profusion of expence which had taken place in the operations of the present war, and complained loudly of the oppressive imposts established for those purposes. In France, the public was no less clamorous on those accounts. Remonstrances from several of the most respectable corporate bodies had been presented to ministry against the continuance of the war, founded on the inability of the kingdom to prosecute it.

The state of the British funds was no secret to the enemy. Were the pecuniary circumstances of this country in the desperate condition in which they had been represented by the advocates of ministry, the enemy would not have been so ready to enter into negociation. But the fact was, they were conscious that the intrinsic strength of this nation was adequate to a much longer maintenance of

of the contest, than was consistent with their own interest, or with their ability to support it ; and for that reason, they were become more tractable than they had threatened to be. Had ministry known how to avail themselves of the present temper and circumstances of our adversaries, these must, however numerous and ambitiously inclined, have consented to much more favourable terms than those which had been obtained.

The next point that came into debate was, the situation of this kingdom respecting its home defence at land. The deficiencies in the various corps of regulars and militia were represented such, that thirty thousand men would be wanted to supply them. The country was so exhausted, or the people so unwilling to enlist, that hardly any recruits could be procured. In such circumstances no offensive operations could take place. Even on a supposition that men could have been obtained from Germany, it would not have been possible to transport them beyond the Channel, while our enemies occupied the seas with such numerous fleets.

The answer to this was a direct contradiction of the whole. Great Britain and Ireland, it was firmly asserted, abounded with men fit for war, but who were invincibly averse to serve against the Americans. In Germany levies might with money have been easily raised ; and there was abundance of shipping, both for their conveyance and protection, to any part of the globe.

The condition of the navy was next adverted to. It was described by Ministry as debilitated in a most alarming degree ; hardly able to defend the coasts of Britain, and protect the most necessary branches of her commerce, much less to give effectual annoyance to the enemy ; to whom, in point of number, its inferiority was striking. One hundred sail

of the line was its utmost amount; and of these some were old and out of repair, and several were feebly manned. An addition of six was all that could have been made in the ensuing spring. But what was this force, when compared to that of the enemy? France and Spain counted already one hundred and thirty sail of the line; to reinforce which ten more were in forwardness; and Holland would join them with twenty-five.

It was mere illusion to cherish any hope of contending with so decisive a superiority. The distribution of this force was no less formidable. Had not peace taken place, a fleet of forty sail of the line lay ready at Cadiz, to accompany a fleet of transports, with fifteen thousand men to the West-Indies; where twenty ships of the line were waiting their arrival, with as many thousand troops. In what manner were the dependencies of Great Britain in those parts prepared to resist such an armament? Our naval strength on that station consisted of no more than forty-six sail of the line. This certainly would not have sufficed to prevent the enemy from making the attempts they had projected; and wherever they might effect a landing, we had nothing to oppose to such an army as theirs. Instead of making an impression on the enemy in that quarter, was it not highly probable that they would have invaded our own possessions, and rendered the present year much more calamitous to us, than the preceding one had been to them?

In the mean time, we had every reason to apprehend, that the naval superiority of France in the East Indies, would still continue. The reinforcements from Britain would at most give us an equality. But that was not sufficient to obstruct effectually the attempts of the enemy upon a coast so widely extended, and where some place might always be found for the landing of troops. Those which

the

French had already set on shore, proved how difficult it would be to prevent others from following them. The force they had now with Hyder Ally exceeded the number of Europeans in the service of Britain ; and more were daily expected. The immense armies which that Prince would bring into the field, aided by the skill and discipline of his French allies, and by the actual strength they would carry to his assistance, were objects of the most serious consideration. If he had, by means of his own forces, been able to over-run the British territories in those parts, what reasonable hope could be formed, that we should be able to resist him, when seconded by troops and officers, equal in valour and experience to our own, and superior in number ?

When we turned our attention home, the prospect was truly alarming. The Dutch were now exerting themselves with all the diligence and industry that had always marked their character. Their motions had hitherto been slow, in hope of a reconciliation with their old friends ; but that expectation being entirely vanished, the partizans of France had now the direction of the Councils of that Republic ; and would put forth its whole strength at sea un thwarted and uncontroled. Without extending it beyond any probable bounds, it must, as soon as they applied themselves with warmth to its re-establishment, become shortly a formidable addition to the numerous fleets which France and Spain intended to employ in the Channel.

The combination of three such maritime powers ought to awake us from all delusive expectations of maintaining the empire of the sea. Without disputing the professional eminence of our officers and seamen, human abilities had their limits ; beyond which they must necessarily yield to superior force. That

That of our enemies was such, that it would crush us by its very weight.

If we pondered duly, and with the coolness becoming the criticalness of our situation, on these various objects, we should find that, notwithstanding the sea was emphatically stiled our element, it was at present a field of danger; upon which Prudence, on beholding the irresistible strength of our innumerable enemies, bids us beware from venturing with inconsiderateness and temerity, while we had it yet in our power to make a timely and honourable retreat.

Opposition animadverted with great asperity upon all these assertions. The condition of the British navy was affirmed to be, both with respect to goodness and number, more flourishing and formidable than at any preceding period during the war. It consisted of one hundred and ten ships of the line, in excellent order, while the navies of France and Spain amounted only to fifteen more; and were known at the same time to be much inferior in soundness of construction, and every other requisite for service. What additions might be made to this force in the course of the year, was a matter of uncertainty and mere conjecture. After two years of preparations and menaces, the Dutch marine still continued very inconsiderable; and the augmentation of the French and Spanish fleets had always been over-rated.

Experience alone could be relied on in cases of this nature; and the events of the last year had shewn that, with a naval force inferior to that we now possess, we had succeeded against the enemy, though stronger then than they would be this present year. Britain had at this hour such officers and men in its fleets, as all the navies of Europe could not equal. Repeated experiment had established their superiority beyond contradiction. Norwithstanding

standing the enemy exceeded us in number, this was no earnest of victory either at land or sea. Skill and bravery were the only sure means of success. In the first, British seamen had no competitors; and in the second, few equals.

The plan of naval operations, projected for the subsequent season, would have not only frustrated the designs of the enemy in the West-Indies, but have enabled our commanders on that station to act on the offensive. A fleet of between fifty and sixty sail of the line had been provided for the West-Indies; which was surely a strength adequate for any purpose in that quarter; and which, without presumption, it might be said, the enemy would not dare to meet.

The accounts from the East-Indies amply confirmed how well we were founded in the good opinion we entertained of our people. With a continual superiority in number of ships and men, the French Commander there, though a man of unquestionable abilities, and animated by a particular aversion to the English, had not been able to obtain any advantages in combat. It was highly probable that considering the equality in shipping, that would have taken a place this year in that quarter, the British Admiral would have been complete master of the sea.

As to the apprehensions so strongly expressed of Hyder Ally and his French auxiliaries, they were far from being justly founded. The power of that Prince had been effectually broken in the two preceding campaigns; his best and veteran troops were almost destroyed, and his personal abilities were at present his chief dependence in the field. The officers and men now fighting for Britain in the East Indies were tried soldiers, of invincible valour, and consummate experience. The natives trained up in the British service, had profited so well by the example

example and instructions of our people, that they behaved invariably upon every occasion with no less firmness and knowledge of their duty. They constituted, together with our troops, a body of men far superior in every military respect to any thing the French could produce in India.

Without disparaging the French, it might be confidently asserted, that they had no commanders in India to be placed on a competition with our own. Their principal strength lay in the skilfulness of their engineers. Herein however they did no more than equal us. But in other branches of military science, saving the meer regularity of discipline, we far exceeded them. Our officers and generals had by their long residence in that country had so many opportunities of improving their talents for war, that our army there abounded with men signally qualified for every department in their profession.

Though numbers of the French officers and soldiers had served in Europe, yet every country was attended with some peculiarities, that gave considerable advantages to those who were acquainted with them. It was from local difficulties alone that the efforts of Great Britain in America had failed. By the same reason it was to be inferred, that the French would meet with no less obstructions in India, which might through the courage and expertness of our troops be rendered insurmountable.

Thus, upon a candid review of our situation in India, it appeared no ways on the decline. Whatever calamities had befallen us through the unseizable discords among those who had the management of our affairs, these were in a fair way of being restored to their former prosperity and splendor. Instead of feeling any alarm for the safety of these important possessions, we ought therefore to look upon them as the securest of any. To this it might be added

added, that while they continued in our hands, they would always furnish the most abundant resources of any foreign branches of our commerce. It was by their Eastern acquisitions the Dutch had formerly risen to such a pitch of opulence and grandeur. It was by depriving us of our vast dependencies in that part of the globe the French proposed to cut off the great sources of our wealth, knowing them to be a principal means of supporting the war. But as experience had so clearly demonstrated that we were able to retain them in defiance of their power and machinations, they ought, in lieu of being the subject of our fears, to operate as an inducement resolutely to continue facing our enemies, till we had brought them to terms honourable and satisfactory to this country.

Though the French had contributed so successfully to divest us of America, they must not expect to find the like number of friends and assistants in India: here we should meet them on a more equal footing. They would be compelled to fight us on neutral ground, where we might hope for decisive successes, and not endure the mortification of gaining victories to no effect.

While this review of our affairs afforded so much encouragement, the prospects nearer home were far from unfavourable. The defect of strength for Channel service had been much insisted on; but the combined efforts of France and Spain, when at their highest, had been found inadequate to the execution of their threats. They had been repeatedly foiled by less exertions than those they would have had to encounter this year. The fleet for home defence was to have consisted of between thirty and forty of the stoutest ships in the British navy, manned with the primest sailors, and commanded by the ablest officers in the nation.

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When all these circumstances were laid together, when it was considered how frequently the power of the enemy had been proved insufficient for the accomplishing of its objects, how much it had been always exaggerated, how customary it was become to under-rate our own, and yet how constantly it persisted in facing and overturning all the most material attempts of the enemy, when every returning year brought fresh instances of our success in repelling them at home, and of our abilities to face them abroad, when, after all their vaunts, they had not made the least impression upon our coast, while we, on the other hand, not only fought them in every other quarter of the globe, but had resolutely bid them defiance on their own shores, when, in despite of their boasted superiority, we had thrice relieved Gibraltar, the first time by the defeat and destruction of the fleet sent to oppose us, the second by compelling them to fly into port, and the third by braving the whole united navies of the House of Bourbon, in a manner that astonished all Europe, and that was confessedly equal to the noblest victory, when such things had been done, when the great commanders that had effected them were still in being, while the spirit and capacity that had so gloriously sustained the honour and interest of the nation, still subsisted unfulfilled and unimpaired, with what face could men pretend to inculcate apprehensions and despondency? What valid argument could be alledged for not continuing to place our confidence in those who had fought so bravely and successfully for their country, wherever they had been trusted with its service and defence?

From the general consideration of the situation of Great Britain, in regard to her finances, army and navy, the debate next adverted to the particular articles of the peace.

It was asserted by Ministry, that a fair and impartial review of these, would shew the treaty by which the war had been terminated, to be fully adequate to the expectations of all reasonable men.

The Newfoundland fishery was now properly divided. Cession had been made to the French of an exclusive right of this fishery within specified limits; to which they were henceforth to be confined. By this measure an end was put to the dissensions that so frequently arose between both nations, when they carried it on conjointly in the same places. The share assigned to France was not however comparable to that retained by England, either in extent or value, as had been amply verified by those who were competent judges.

The restoration of the two isles of St. Pierre and Miquelon was an article of no consequence. They could be of no service to us; and would by no means enable the French, in time of war, to molest our fisheries. They could easily be reduced; as on a survey it appeared, that no fortification could be erected on them, sufficiently strong to resist the fire of any ship of force.

The articles relating to the West-Indies were clearly to the advantage of Great Britain. St. Christopher, Nevis, and Montserrat, St. Vincent, Dominico, and Granada, now restored to Great Britain by the peace, were unquestionably of much greater importance than those of St. Lucia and Tobago; both which ought at the same time to be considered as restorations, rather than cessions. Tobago, previous to the peace of sixty-three, belonged to France; to which we now returned it, together with our late conquest of St. Lucia. This latter island, though commanding a view of Martinico, could not be placed on a footing with Dominico; which, in case of hostilities, would effectually interrupt the communication between Martinico

nico and Guadaloupe, the two principal French islands in those seas.

The possession of Tobago ought, it had been said, to have been insisted on, upon account of its abundant produce of cotton; an article of such necessity in our manufactures. But they had long flourished before the acquisition of Tobago; and would continue to flourish no less, while we preserved our other West-India islands, and were able to afford the same price for the cotton of this isle, as we did before.

By the cessions in Africa, France regained possession of the river Senegal and its appendages, together with the island of Goree; for which she restored the settlements on the river Gambia, together with the same participation in the gum trade that Britain had enjoyed before the year fifty-five. This trade, it was said, no nation could monopolise: as much of it would remain to the English as they had ever had, or could want, without the necessity of being at the expence of so much money, and what was infinitely more valuable to this country, so many valuable lives, for the retention of places which, experience had shown, would not prevent other trading nations from sharing in the productions of that coast.

In the East Indies concessions had been made to the French very beneficial to them, but by no means injurious to Great Britain. The only advantages they had gained, beside the restoration of what had been taken from them, were some districts to render Pondicherry and Karical places of more convenience than heretofore; and the permission to drain the marshes round Chandernagore, by incircling it with a ditch, to carry off the stagnated waters to the neighbouring rivers. Allowing the French to be gainers by the peace in the East Indies, still the precarious situation of our affairs

affairs in those parts, at the time it was made, required some condescension on our part. But notwithstanding these concessions, the power of the English in the East-Indies rested on such a firm foundation, in consequence of the arrangements produced by the peace, that no danger could possibly be apprehended from their European enemies, any more than from the country powers at variance with them.

That article of the treaty, by which France was re-invested with the power of acting without interference at Dunkirk, was defended from the absolute nullity of the restraints imposed upon her, owing to the negligence of every Ministry in Britain, since the peace of Utrecht, when they took place, to procure their observance. This inattention proved of how little consequence they were esteemed. The truth was, that no expence or labour could render the harbour of Dunkirk of that importance to France, and danger to Britain, as had been represented. The chief aim of the French Court, was to wipe off the disgrace of being subject at home to the controul of a foreign power. A request of this nature ought not to be denied to a nation, with which we were upon terms of reconciliation, especially as no detriment could reasonably be apprehended from a compliance with its wishes in a point, where its honour was solely concerned.

After this review of the treaty with France, that with Spain was recapitulated in the like manner. To this monarchy restitutions were made of possessions originally her own; and of which the utility to this country was far from being of any material importance. Minorca was an useless burthen in peace, and in war lay exposed to the whole circumjacent dominions of the House of Bourbon. An immense tract of sea was to be crossed, before any

succours could reach that island. Experience had shewn, that from this circumstance alone it was untenable. In the war preceding that which was just concluded, France had captured it, when we had her alone to contend with, and preserved, at the same time, our naval superiority every where.

The Floridas indeed began to thrive; but after twenty years of labour and painful attention, notwithstanding their vast extent, their produce was hardly deserving of attention, when compared with that of many of our smallest dependencies. The balance of that branch of commerce might possibly amount to about fifty thousand pounds in our favour; but was that an object worthy of contention, when so many superior interests were at stake? Geographical dimensions excepted, the Floridas had little to boast: They made a figure on the map; but the possession of near three centuries, during which the Spaniards had remained undisturbed masters of those countries, had experimentally proved that their intrinsic value must be very inconsiderable; or that the Spaniards knew not how to improve them. In such hands, therefore, as they would be of little service to their owners, they could be of no detriment to Great Britain.

On revising, without prejudice, the concessions to the House of Bourbon, they were much greater in appearance than in reality: they did not leave the French or Spaniards possessed of more direct advantages than they could call their own before the war. Their commerce would receive no other increase than what might accrue from their intercourse with the United States of America. But these knew their own interest too well, and pursued it too keenly, to open a correspondence with any nation from which it was not clear they could derive profit. There was no country upon earth from which they could be so well supplied as in Britain,
with

with most, if not with all of those articles which they received from her antecedently to the war. The extensive freedom which they enjoyed in almost every channel of commerce, previous to the breaking out of the late troubles, hardly left any others to be opened.

Those who imagined that views of resentiment would influence their commercial proceedings, knew little of human nature. Interest alone was the foundation of all trade. Interest was a motive too powerful to resist where whole nations were concerned: as it would breed division among friends, it would also reconcile the bitterest of foes. If France and Spain, in their assistance of America against Britain, had been prompted by the hope of monopolising the trade of its Colonies, they would find themselves egregiously mistaken. They would share no more of it than was perfectly consistent with the conveniency of the Americans, who certainly would, like other people, be guided in those matters by the mere prospect of gain, divested of all other considerations.

The disquisition on the treaty with America occasioned no less heat than the former; both parties were equally vehement in their respective attempts to justify or to reprobate it.

The ground of defence on the side of ministry was, that the earnest desire of Parliament to put an end to the contest, had guided them in every step they had taken in the framing of that treaty. It was universally allowed to be an indispensable measure in the circumstances of the nation. All that remained for them to do was to make it as consistent with the dignity and welfare of Great Britain as the difficulties of the time would permit.

The country ceded to the United States was doubtless of a great extent; but the retention of any more than had been reserved to Great Britain, would have proved in its immediate consequence a source

of continual jars and dissensions. The territories of both parties could never in that case have been clearly and indisputably ascertained; whereas by the present division of that immense continent, each party knew precisely its own share. The limits of both were now marked by mountains, rivers, and lakes of such magnitude, that it was impossible to mistake them.

In this cession, however, the interest of this country had been duly consulted. The far greater portion of the fur trade, the most important one in the northern tracts of the American continent, had been preserved. We should enjoy it nearly without rivals, as it lay almost entirely on that side of the lakes that belonged to the British division.

The profits derivable from the possession of these northern districts, had been much overrated. Canada itself, for instance, did not yield to Great Britain a balance in trade in any wise equivalent to its cost: the expences incurred on account of that Province had for several years amounted to eight hundred thousand pounds annually; while the exports to it did not exceed the imports from it so much as four hundred thousand pounds.

It had been complained that the space of land included in the cessions to the United States, amounted to eighteen thousand square miles. But it ought to be no less noticed, that much of this was comprehended in mountainous and uncultivable wastes, which no industry could improve; and that a large proportion of the rest, would, from its situation, probably remain uncultivated for ages. But exclusive of these considerations, the experience of the present times manifested the danger of distant colonisations. Were we to people them from home, it would prove a measure of much more expence than profit; were they to be assigned to the American Loyalists, the rancour and animosity subsisting between

tween them and their countrymen would unavoidably involve us in a short time in another quarrel.—By leaving these lands to the American States, the same disposition to tillage and rural occupations would remain, which had so long employed the Colonists in such branches of labour as had rendered them subservient to our commercial views. In proportion as they extended their back-settlements, new demands would arise for a multitude of those articles which either were not fabricated in America, or could be procured on more advantageous terms from abroad. While land might be obtained with facility, the natural propensity of mankind to cultivate and dwell upon their own possessions, would render agriculture the principal and favourite pursuit of the inhabitants of the American continent, and furnish an abundant source of employment for those commercial nations with whom they maintained a correspondence. Among these we should for a variety of reasons needless to be specified, retain much the largest share.

Penobscot, a tract of land to the north of New England, had since it had been ceded to the Americans, been represented as remarkably productive of timber fit for the largest masts; but those who had officially surveyed the woods of that country, were ready to certify that they did not produce trees of sufficient dimensions for those purposes.

Censures had been passed on the liberty granted to the Americans of fishing not only on the banks of Newfoundland, but also on the coasts of the British dependencies in America. But that liberty did not in the least interfere with our interest, or with our arrangements in that country. There were two fishing seasons, the winter and summer; the first from their situation they necessarily enjoyed wholly to themselves, undisturbed by any other nation.—Of course they carried on their fisheries at that time

wherever they thought proper, without the possibility of hindrance or molestation. But during the second season the advantages were all on our side, from our possession of Newfoundland, where none but ourselves were entitled to the drying and curing of fish. It was in consequence of this benefit that we stood in no need of the liberty of carrying on any fishery on the coast of the countries belonging to the American States.

Much clamour had been raised against that article of the treaty by which the Congress was to recommend the case of the Loyalists to the consideration of the different states composing the American confederacy. But it was not in the power of Congress to engage for more. It was the style in which they had uniformly addressed the separate members of the union, ever since it had commenced. The jealousy of the respective states was such, that no other had been used. It always had however met with the fullest deference, and would doubtless, in the present instance, command as much respect as in all others.

The case of the Loyalists was certainly deserving of the most particular attention. No people in the British dominions were more worthy of the notice and care of government: but had not the recommendation of Congress been accepted, the war must have continued; the option lay solely between these two alternatives. It might appear ungenerous to give up this point to the American Commissioners, as we seemed thereby to abandon to the discretion of the enemy those who had devoted themselves to our service with so much zeal and fidelity. But the fact was, they were by no means relinquished. Were the requisitions to be made by Congress in their favour disregarded by the respective states, there still remained the native generosity and gratitude of the British nation. To this they well knew

I knew they could always appeal, with a certainty of meeting with a refuge from adversity. The burthens of this country were great, but its magnanimity was still greater. It bore them with alacrity for the support of its honour, and would chearfully add to them for the relief of those who had faithfully stood by it in the day of trial. But without answering for more than could be done, the Loyalists might depend on the amplest protection in this country, should their own refuse them a mild and honourable treatment. A very moderate proportion of the immense sums annually lavished in hostilities against the Americans, would suffice to place those among them who had suffered for their loyalty to Britain, on as comfortable a footing here as they had ever enjoyed at home. It was asserted on this occasion, that less than half of the expenditure in one American campaign, would be adequate to the most generous compensation that could be desired by the Loyalists. It would indemnify them to the full for all their losses; and a residence in their own country excepted, would render their condition as prosperous as ever.

Such being the real state of the case, nothing could be more illiberal and unjust, than to blame those who had conducted the business of the peace, for having concluded it without insisting peremptorily on a restoration of the Loyalists to the unbounded possession of all the rights and properties they had enjoyed antecedently to the contest. They who exclaimed with so much vehemence against this part of the treaty, ought to be told, that no expedient was left untried to obtain the fullest restitution of the Loyalists to their primitive situation. This point was urged preferably to all others. So keen and ardent were the British Commissioners upon this subject, that the very negociation itself was suspended, and was once near being finally bro-

ken off, on the American Commissioners declaring, that it was not in their power to proceed any further than to engage on the part of Congress, that it should earnestly recommend the case of the Loyalists to the generous consideration of the respective states.

But would any prudent man have advised the continuation of a war, the successes of which were evidently so precarious, while a termination could be put to it without wounding the national honour by a dereliction of those friends whose demands were the only impediment to its conclusion. The facility with which these demands certainly could, and undoubtedly would chearfully be answered by an opulent, generous, and equitable people, left no room to hesitate long between the continuing to spill the blood of two nations, who, though divided by the ocean, were in every other respect but one, and the hastening to reconcile them, and to bury in oblivion all the dissentions and calamities under which they were labouring.

From these motives the negociation, which was almost expiring, on the sole account of what related to the Loyalists, had been resumed, and pursued with that alacrity which brought it so speedily to a completion. This very speed had indeed been heavily reprobated. It was no difficult task, said the opponents to the terms of the peace, to settle a dispute by making every concession that was required by the adverse party. But they who were so severe in their censure, ought to have reflected, that we were framing the conditions of a reconciliation, which in order to be permanent, should bear no marks of any design or inclination on our part to retain the least pretence to renew those claims we had given up, or to detract from those advantages which were yielded.

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When we proposed to enter into a treaty with the United States of America, it was not merely a cessation of hostilities we had in view, such as might take place with other powers at variance with us; the object in contemplation was of a far more important and extensive nature: we proposed an absolute abolition of all possible causes of enmity, and to give the Americans every proof in our power that we meant to treat them in the most amicable and benevolent manner they could expect and require.

Such being our desire, ought we not earnestly to strive, by every obvious means, to convince the Americans of our sincerity? Was it therefore consistent with such intentions to cavil about points, the most favourable decision of which in our favour, would only produce causes of discontent, and suspicion that we still entertained ideas repugnant to the sentiments of amity we professed, and that we waited only an opportunity to manifest them, to our advantage, and their detriment? If we seriously intended to recover the affection of the Americans, the readiest and surest method was to remove all occasion of jealousy, to treat them with a generous and manly confidence, and by setting them the example of forgiving and forgetting all that was past, to induce them to repay us with a cordial imitation.

Besides these considerations, every one of which must have decisive weight in the minds of dispassionate men, there was another of infinite importance in the present juncture of affairs. We were involved in a contest such as no nation ever experienced. We were contending with the two most powerful republics on the globe, Holland in the old, and America in the new world, and with the two most potent monarchies in the universe, France and Spain. True it was, we had through the valour of our people, and the greatness of our resources, made hitherto an honourable resistance: but we could not reasonably

reasonably expect to oppose much longer successfully such an host of enemies. The only probable means to extricate ourselves from the multiplicity of difficulties surrounding us, was by breaking this terrible confederacy. It was only by such a measure that Venice in the beginning of the fifteenth, and Holland in the last century, escaped a destruction which would otherwise have been unavoidable. But circumstances did not favour our endeavours to disunite our enemies. They still remained as firmly allied among themselves, and as perseveringly inveterate against this nation, as at the first moment of their confederacy. The only method to bring about its dissolution, was therefore a peace upon the best terms that could be procured.

The present was unquestionably the most auspicious moment to compass this desirable end. The victory of Lord Rodney over the French in the West Indies, the repulse of the combined efforts of the House of Bourbon at Gibraltar by General Elliott, and the relief of that place in the face of the whole naval strength of France and Spain by Lord Howe, were events, that while they immortalized the names of those great commanders, enabled Britain to demand honourable terms from her enemies. But though they were inclined, from our successes, to meet us upon a more equitable footing than before this return of good fortune, they still were too conscious of their own strength, to be so much cast down, as to depart from their original plan, which was to sever the British Colonies from the parent state.

Nor were they alone in this determination. There was not a state or potentate in Europe that did not openly or secretly entertain the same wishes. Whence this universal aim to diminish the power of Great Britain arose, was not the subject of discussion; but daily experience proved its existence, even among those

those who did not explicitly rank themselves among our foes.

Was it compatible with the safety of this country to remain any longer in such dangerous, or to speak more properly, in such desperate circumstances, while a fair opportunity offered to shake off at once all incumbrances, and regain such a footing of security, as to open a prospect of retrieving all our losses, and recovering our former lustre?

This happy opportunity, produced by the concurrence of the fortunate events just mentioned, ought therefore to be improved with all possible expedition, while the impression they had made on our enemies was yet fresh and forcible. Were we to suffer the surprise at these unexpected blows to subside, their confidence in the superiority of strength which they still possessed might soon return, and operate much more to our disadvantage than heretofore, from the additional care and arrangements with which the exercise of it would be accompanied. If we therefore consulted our interest, we should hasten to employ the present hour, and commit nothing to the chance of unpropitious accidents. Were we to meet with a reverse of fortune, the change would, according to all the rules of probability, prove finally decisive and fatal to this country, from the daily encreasing multitude of its declared or clandestine enemies.

In answer to this justification of the terms of peace, it was warmly asserted, that when duly considered, they were much more favourable to our enemies than they had any reason to expect, as would fully appear by a circumstantial examination.

That part of the coast of Newfoundland where the French were to enjoy an exclusive fishery, could not in reason be deemed less productive than that we retained. It had been specifically demanded as a proportionable share by the French ministry, and

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it were absurd to imagine they would knowingly have contented themselves with the worst.

The islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon were susceptible of more improvement in the article of fortification, and would prove of more utility in case of a war than had been represented, Their situation alone commanded the Gulf of St. Lawrence. When put into that state of strength which France would certainly not omit to give them, they must evidently greatly molest our fishery on the Banks of Newfoundland, and interrupt our navigation to Canada.

The cession of Tobago and St. Lucia was a much more pernicious measure than people in general seemed aware of. In a commercial light, the first of these islands was of the highest importance : its cotton was the best in the West Indies ; the second was a station of which the usefulness in war was continually manifested while in our possession. It was a constant check upon the operations of the enemy in those parts ; it had enabled us essentially to watch the motions of their fleets, and, in consequence, to obtain that signal victory which had altered the situation of affairs so much in our favour.

By giving up Senegal and Goree, the gum trade lay wholly at the disposal of the French. On their representation at the peace of sixty-two, that without one of these places they should be wholly deprived of it, we had generously consented they should retain one ; but as they would now possess both, our exclusion from that trade followed of course, unless we subscribed to their own terms. Gum was an article of indispensable necessity in various branches of our manufactories, those of silk and linen especially. The monopoly of it ought not therefore to have been ceded to our principal rivals in commerce, as well as our most dangerous enemies.

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The cessions to France in the East Indies were treated with the utmost severity. Here the enemy had no equivalent to restore, and yet had obtained concessions of the most important nature. The grants of territory around Pondicherry and Karikal were not only to be viewed in the light of additional conveniences, but as real accessions of power and influence to the French, and in no small measure as humiliations to the English in the eyes of the natives.

This part of the treaty was represented as highly prejudicial to our interest in India. Britain engaged in a manner to become the protectress of France in that country: this was a strain of complaisance ill agreeing with good policy; and the more blameable, as the arms of France in India had been less prosperous than any where. A short time would probably evince the erroneous conduct of those who yielded with such unnecessary facility to the request of a power, from which the experience of ages had taught us to apprehend every kind of enmity, whenever possessed of the ability to exercise it.

The permission now granted to France of carrying on its trade in those parts, in the same manner as it was done by the late French East India Company, was much too indefinite. It opened so large a field to their pretensions, that we should probably be soon obliged to oppose them by main force. Since the last peace we had enjoyed the privilege of searching their vessels, and prohibiting the importation of arms; but if they were now to be released from this examination, they would hardly abstain from conveying to Chandernagore all that was necessary to render it a strong and formidable settlement; which from its vicinity to our own, would necessarily endanger their safety, as well as detriment their trade.

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The suppression of the various stipulations regarding the harbour of Dunkirk, framed with so much solicitude at the peace of Utrecht, was adverted to with no less asperity. These stipulations were looked upon as so necessary at that time, that unless Lewis the Fourteenth had consented to them, no peace would have been made. The wisdom of our ministry at that epocha foresaw the consequence of suffering this harbour to remain in the condition it had been put by that monarch. Its basin was sufficiently deep and capacious to admit of at least thirty ships of great burthen. It was from thence an expedition was attempted in favour of the Pretender upon the coast of Scotland in the year seventeen hundred and eight. The fleet employed upon this occasion consisted of a number of vessels of considerable size.

But what chiefly rendered Dunkirk an object of apprehension, should it be restored to its former state, was its proximity to the shores of England : it faced in a manner the mouth of the Thames ; nothing could issue out of that river unobserved by that port. It would in time of war become a station for the stoutest privateers, and keep the trade of the British metropolis in continual alarms.

In this manner had France, though unsuccessful in the East, and defeated in the West Indies, when deprived of her fishery in the North American seas, and cut off from the most lucrative branches of the African trade, when her marine began visibly to decline, and ours to recover its ascendancy, in this inferiority of circumstances, had her negotiators been able to frame a treaty as advantageous to her as if the superiority lay entirely on her side.

The treaty with Spain underwent also some very severe strictures. By the cession of Minorca we had lost an island of the utmost importance to the support of our Mediterranean trade in war. Here our

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men of war, privateers, and merchantmen found a harbour to refit in case of damages received in fight, and a certain refuge from the enemy.

Whatever might be pleaded for the cession of West Florida, the surrendering of East Florida could not be justified. It was a spacious country, had an extensive coast, with some excellent harbours, remarkable for not being infested with the ship worms so common in the West Indies. It commanded an immense track of navigation by its peninsular position between the Gulf of Mexico and the coast of North America, and must in the hands of an enemy prove a great annoyance to our Jamaica trade. It possessed also no few internal resources, and was capable of much improvement. The people settled in it were firmly attached to the British government. But what chiefly recommended it at present, was the convenience of its situation for the receptacle of the persecuted Loyalists. Here, without wandering far from their native soil, they would have found an asylum much more to their satisfaction than the uncomfortable climate of Nova Scotia.

The terms granted to America met in their turn with no less censure than the preceding. It was bitterly complained that the limits assigned to the dependencies of Britain and the United States, left these in possession of a multiplicity of strong places, constructed and fortified at a vast expence to this country, and which there appeared no valid reason for having ceded.

In consequence of this cession the principal part of the fur trade would fall into the hands of the Americans, notwithstanding our endeavours to represent the matter otherwise. We might have retained it wholly to ourselves, by keeping the immense tracts thus lavishly parted with to our enemies, who could have claimed but a moderate share of them,

confisitently with the circumstances they were in at the time of treating. We then held Charlestown in South Carolina, which gave us in a great measure the command of that province. We were masters of New York and the neighbouring isles, especially the large and important one of Long Island. These being the head quarters of the British armies, and lying in the centre of North America, kept the whole continent in awe. The Indian countries and nations contiguous to the back-settlements were in our interest, and in the Colonies themselves we had numbers of zealous friends and adherents. Even among those who had professed themselves our enemies, multitudes were heartily desirous of terminating the war at all events, and did not scruple openly to express their sentiments.

The statement of the expences on account of Canada included those of the war. The balance of the trade carried on in that province was greatly in our favour, and promised a considerable increase. The merchants who were settled there, had from the conviction of the vast profits to be derived from the commerce they had established in the interior parts of the country, erected large magazines in the principal places of trade along the great lakes, and had laid out capital sums to fortify and render them convenient. These would now stand them in little stead, from the superior share which the Americans could not fail to derive of all the benefits produced in future by a commercial intercourse with the Indians, in consequence of the prodigious extent of territory so needlessly ceded by the treaty.

By these cessions we not only suffered a deprivation of the far greatest part of our fur trade, but incurred a disgrace that ought to wound still deeper the feelings of a spirited people. Upwards of twenty tribes of Indians in our alliance were deserted by us, without making a suitable provision

for their security against the resentment of the Americans.

The right of fishing on all the British coasts of America was allowed to the subjects of the United States in common with those of Great Britain, while these were denied the same privilege on the coasts of the former, notwithstanding the professions so strongly specified in the treaty, that its purport was to consult impartially the reciprocal advantages of both parties.

In return for the liberality, or rather profusion with which Britain had made so many concessions, the only article of any consequence insisted upon in its favour, had been denied with as much haughtiness and inflexibility, as if no advantages had been granted to America, and as if the peace was a mere act of condescension on the part of Congress.

The demand of restitution to the Loyalists of their property, confiscated during the war for their fidelity to our cause, had been refused by the American Commissioners, on pretence that neither they nor Congress itself could comply with it, any farther than by a recommendation of it to the different states. If such were the powers of Congress, or of those whom it commissioned to treat on its behalf, they were wholly inadequate to the proper purposes of treating, and tended only to delude those with whom they pretended to negotiate.

This demand was in itself so just, and founded on so many historical precedents, that Congress could not possibly plead a want of foresight that it would be made. It had been usual in all ages, on the cessation of a civil war, to grant a general amnesty. No other motives but those of the basest and most barbarous revenge, could induce men to express an averseness to so humane and necessary a measure. Next to the cruelty of such a refusal was the meanness of those who submitted to it.

Circumstances empowered this nation to have acted with such firmness, as to compel the Americans to relax of their obstinacy in this particular. Until they had consented to a generous treatment of the Loyalists, we ought to have withheld the restitution of the many strong places still remaining in our hands, and made the surrender of them the price of their acquiescence in our demands in favour of the brave and faithful people who had suffered so much upon our account.

Neither France nor Spain could in the nature of things have countenanced the republican inexorableness displayed by America upon this occasion. Fidelity to the Crown was a virtue too much prized in monarchies to lose any of its worth even in the eye of a hostile Court. Those of Versailles and Madrid valued it too much in their own subjects, not to show it respect in those of a monarch, with whom though they were at war, yet they had always testified a sufficient readiness to observe the laws of justice and generosity reciprocally established between civilized nations.

No apology could be made or admitted for so spiritless and flagitious a complaisance to the Americans. They affected to consider the Dutch in particular as models worthy of imitation in the manner with which they emancipated themselves from the Spanish yoke. But the Dutch had certainly set them no examples of vindictiveness : when they obtained a recognition of their independence, they generously agreed to an act of oblivion, and even restored to those who had adhered to the cause of Spain, their property of every denomination that had been confiscated, or the full value of it.

Spain had twice acted with no less lenity towards the Province of Catalonia ; the first time on its revolting from that Crown, and calling in the assistance of France, during the last century, and after-

wards on its refusing to acknowledge the Bourbon family at the beginning of the present. In both cases all punishment was remitted on its returning to obedience : life, possessions, laws, and immunities remained inviolate.

England had conducted itself in the same manner at the Revolution towards that party in Ireland which had sided with James the Second. No proscriptions took place, and upon submitting to government, every man was admitted to the undisturbed enjoyment of his property.

With these, and so many other examples before them, nothing could be more ungenerous and inhuman than the behaviour of the Americans towards those of their countrymen who had differed from them in opinion during the late contest, and had in consequence espoused the cause of Britain. It were more honourable for their character, as well as more consistent with good policy, to efface at once all remembrance of internal discords, and bring about a cordial reconciliation of all parties among them. This could only be accomplished by lenient measures ; all others were equally disgraceful to those who adopted, and to those who having it in their power, did not resolutely prevent them.

Such were the principal strictures passed by opposition on the terms of peace. They were answered on the part of ministry, by referring their opponents to the justification of it already laid before them. This they firmly contended must prove in every respect whatsoever, reasonable and satisfactory to all who divested themselves of party considerations, and would be at the pains of a candid and dispassionate examination.

They insisted, in particular, that by adverting with due attention to the tenour of the treaty, it was manifest that neither the Loyalists nor the Indian allies of Britain were relinquished in the man-

ner so invidiously represented. It had been carefully provided by an article framed for that very purpose, that no individual whatever should suffer either in his person or property on account of the part he might have taken in the war. By this it was clear, that though what was past could not be recalled, yet no severities in future would be exercised against the friends of Britain, and that their preceding conduct was secured from all retrospect.

As to the Indians in our alliance, they remained on the same footing as before the contest. Those that were included within the line of partition assigned to the United States, were no more delivered up to these than those within the boundaries prescribed to Britain were made over to this latter.— The obvious meaning of the treaty in adjusting these limits being no more than that neither of the contracting parties should form any settlements, or carry on any trade beyond them.

It could not therefore be asserted that the peace was either dishonourable or disadvantageous, considering the situation in which the imprudence and obstinacy of the ministry that pursued coercive measures against America had placed Great Britain. To this ministry, and to no other, would any honest man lay the imputation of having brought this country into those difficulties which had made it necessary to agree to those concessions that were so heavily censured? But whoever thought proper to reprobate these, it ill became those men to assume such a liberty, from whose mal-administration they originally arose.

Nor were the advocates of ministry wanting in insinuations that it was not so much the peace, as the places and power of those who had brought it to a conclusion, that irritated their opponents. This topic was urged with a warmth and acrimony not inferior to what had been experienced on any former

mer occasion between the contending parties. Nothing, it was said, but the lust of power could have wrought a coalition between men so discordant in principle as those who were united at present against ministry. They had for years opposed each other with a violence that bordered upon indecency: they had differed in every measure, in every idea relating to the government of this country. Their mutual rancour hurried them into personalities and invectives that hardly knew any limitations. Whence could therefore so strange and unnatural a reconciliation between them proceed, but from selfish and interested motives?

Opposition retorted these reproaches with no less asperity. It was not the peace, said they, which they condemned; it was the manifest precipitation with which it was concluded that offended all cool and reasoning individuals. It was the scandalous facility with which ministry had yielded to the demands of our enemies, that induced men of all parties to join in the severest censure upon them. This union of sentiments in reprobating them, was produced by the general indignation that was felt at their conduct. Its absurdity and its weakness were so apparent, that even those who could accord in nothing else, agreed with the most perfect unanimity in stigmatizing the framers of a peace which was evidently founded on ignorance and pusillanimity. No ministry that was not totally blind to the interests of this nation, and to the advantageous circumstances in which it stood at the time of the treaty, would have consented to the terms which had rendered it so odious. No man of spirit, in any circumstances, would have submitted to those articles in it that were so unworthy of the dignity and character of the British nation.

From these causes alone arose that coalition so hateful to ministry. This coalition, should it be

improved into a sincere reconciliation of the parties that composed it, would prove a most happy and auspicious event to this country in its present situation. Coalitions of this kind had more than once saved it in the hour of danger. It was by the union of different parties during the last war, that its termination was so glorious. The great Lord Chatham was at the head of this coalition; and it was an acquisition of honour to his character that he so readily acquiesced in so beneficial a measure.

It was by a still more universal coalition the Revolution itself was effected, and the foundation laid of that political establishment which this country has so much reason to prize. From these, and other precedents that might be adduced, it was highly unjust to cast a reproach upon men for laying aside their private animosities, and uniting for the sake of the public. Men that were capable of such a sacrifice of their feelings, instead of being accused of selfishness, deserved to be held out as patterns of the most real and useful patriotism.

The persons who were now at the head of opposition, had lately been the principal leaders of the two parties that had so long divided us. This was unquestionably the most desirable circumstance in their present coalition. The acknowledged eminence of their respective abilities would carry such a weight and influence into the transaction of business, as would enable them, should they be advanced to power, to constitute what was most wanted in this country, a ministry possessed of popular esteem and confidence. This alone could effectually strengthen the hands of government, and terminate those discords that had been so fatal to this nation.

A variety of other arguments were produced in this celebrated contest, which was supported with unabated fervour on each side during the space of a whole

a whole night. It was eight in the ensuing morning before a division took place; when the ministerial address on the peace was rejected by a majority of fifteen; two hundred and eight voting for, and two hundred and twenty-four against it.

In the House of Lords ministry was more fortunate: the address moved by them was carried in their favour by seventy-two votes against fifty-nine.

Four days after this debate, opposition, encouraged by its success on the seventeenth, moved in consequence of it, that the concessions made to the enemies of Great Britain, were greater than they were entitled to, on a comparative view of their situation and that of this country.

This motion revived the preceding altercation; but opposition again remained victorious, by a majority of seventeen: one hundred and ninety voting for ministry, and two hundred and seven against them.

Thus ended the parliamentary debates occasioned by the treaty of peace. They were no less vehement, and of much longer duration out of Parliament. An inundation of writings filled the public on this subject; and rendered it for a long time a cause of incessant bickerings and disputes, which the many interesting objects which have since occupied the attention of this country have not yet completely quieted.

In the mean time a negotiation had been opened with the States-General at the Hague. On the dissolution of the ministry in the end of March eighty-two, proposals of a separate and immediate peace were laid before them by that which succeeded.— But notwithstanding the cordiality and condescension which accompanied this offer, the councils of the States were under such influence, that it was rejected, though the conditions proffered them were the most advantageous they could possibly

require, being a renewal of the famous treaty of sixteen hundred seventy-four, by which they would have secured all their requisitions from this country.

At the close of the year, after the provisional treaty with America had been concluded, and while those with France and Spain were in forwardness, the Dutch ministers at Paris proposed a negociation with the British minister at that Court, on the terms offered to them in the month of April preceding; but they met with a refusal in their turn, and were given to understand, that having put a negative on the endeavours of Great Britain to effect a particular reconciliation with Holland, that country had no right to expect any more than to be placed on the same footing as other powers.

Preliminary articles of peace being however agreed upon between Great Britain, on the one part, and by France and Spain on the other, in January ensuing, a suspension of arms took place, at the same time with respect to Holland; by which the Dutch were included in the general pacification. But notwithstanding the definitive arrangements among the other belligerent powers, in consequence of the restoration of peace, were finally concluded by the commencement of September, it was not till then that the States-General came to a preliminary settlement with Great Britain.

The terms of the treaty were a reciprocal restitution of all the places and territories taken on either side, the settlement of Negapatnam in the East Indies excepted: this was to remain in the possession of Great Britain, unless an equivalent was given in its stead.

The navigation of the Eastern seas was to be free and unmolested to the British shipping in all parts.

These two articles were the only objects deserving of particular consideration in the treaty; the remain-

remainder consisting of the mutual restoration of prisoners, and of such other adjustments and stipulations as are usual in all treaties of peace.

It was observed on this occasion, that the ill success predicted by politicians to the Dutch, on their siding against the English, was strictly and literally verified. The Seven United Provinces, hurried away by a blind enthusiasm in favour of the United States of America, and fascinated, as it were, by a similitude of appellation, imagined that there was a near resemblance in the causes that occasioned, as well as in the circumstances that accompanied the change of their respective governments from a monarchy into a republic.

In consequence of this idea, they forgot the natural ties that bound their interest so firmly with that of Great Britain. Impelled by the narrow maxims of a commercial jealousy, improvident of all concerns but those of the present hour, they unwisely gave ear to the clamours of an interested faction, deluded by the prospect of benefits that were at best transitory and precarious.

No state in Europe had a fairer opportunity of displaying both its policy and spirit. An honourable adherence to the interest of Great Britain, which the experience of two centuries had so forcibly proved to be their own, would have operated as an effectual check upon that power it chiefly behoves them to keep within bounds. No great exertions would have been requisite for the due accomplishment of this purpose: little more, perhaps, than a respectable footing of neutrality, or, at most, a resolute and explicit determination to preserve inviolate, in case of real necessity, their friendship and engagements with this country, would have sufficed, in conjunction with the acting strength of Britain, to deter its enemies from forming that

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combination which cost it such a profusion of blood and treasure to resist.

A conduct framed upon such principles, would, in the persuasion of competent judges, have answered every desirable end. It would have upheld that character of consistency and foresight, for which they had so long and so deservedly been noted. It would have secured that independent situation which they had hitherto so happily maintained; and it would have prevented the degradation of being at length compelled to commit themselves to the protection of a power whose ambition was proverbial in the political world, and the effects of which no people had more woefully experienced than themselves.

Next to Holland, that member of the confederacy against Britain which suffered most was Spain. The recovery of Minorca and of the Floridas, was but a poor compensation for the prodigious expence and loss of men incurred at Gibraltar, and in the various naval expeditions and manifold exertions that monarchy was obliged to make, in pursuance of its engagements with France and its American allies.

What rendered its conduct the more blameable in the eyes of all sound politicians, and of far the greatest majority of its own people, was the dangerous situation in which the issue of the war placed the Spanish possessions in America. Europe has but one idea on this subject; which is, that Spain acted with the highest imprudence in contributing to the independence of the British Colonies. It will, in all likelihood, be the first power that will experience the consequence of a proximity to a people that inherit in a conspicuous degree the courage and enterprising disposition of the nation from which they draw their origin, and that have already given sufficient proofs that they will omit no opportunity of extending their limits, and carrying their commerce

merce as far as their power and circumstances will enable them.

France itself, though it compassed that object so long and so ardently in its wishes, the dismemberment of the British empire, was deemed at the period of the peace, to have paid much too dear a price for the attainment of this end. The resources of that kingdom were so exhausted, and its finances so completely reduced, that in the beginning of October eighty-three, a month after the definitive treaty of peace had been signed by the respective parties, the Bank of Paris, supported by the whole strength of government, stopped payment.

But exclusive of this event, the alarmingness of which the French have endeavoured in vain to extenuate, strong indications soon appeared in a variety of instances, how incredibly short of their expectations those benefits would prove, which they were so sanguine in promising themselves upon the emancipation of the British Colonies from their dependence on the parent state.

Nor did the United States of America appear in the eye of many sagacious observers, to have obtained any real advantages by the alteration of their political system. Whatever might be their future destiny, it was evident that years would pass before they could arrive at a permanent and satisfactory settlement of their internal affairs, and recover from the disorder into which they had been thrown by the violent state of hostilities in which they had so long continued. Their commerce, on which they founded such extensive prospects, would probably long feel the want of the sustaining hand of Britain, and afford them complete proofs that their separation from this country was not attended with those beneficial consequences that had been held out to them with so much confidence.

Britain, on the other hand, though deprived of those Colonies she had planted and reared with so much

much care, and protected with so much glory, still remained an object of terror and admiration to all her enemies. With a spirit superior to all difficulties, and with resources, though deeply tried, yet far from exhausted, she still appeared great and respectable. From their consciousness of the strength and courage she yet possessed, her opponents were no less, if not even more desirous to put an end to the quarrel than herself. They fully saw she was able and determined to continue it, sooner than submit to a degradation of her character, by accepting of such terms as they had proposed in the height of their expectations to impose upon her.

The events of the last campaign dwelt ineffaceably on their reflections. The successes obtained by Great Britain, and the valour through which they were accomplished, had fixed the attention of all Europe, and extorted the applause even of many who had hitherto appeared indifferent to her fate: France and Spain in particular, were not without apprehensions, that the other European powers not immediately interested in this contest, and beyond the reach of their influence, might at length open their eyes to the danger to which they exposed themselves, by permitting the House of Bourbon to carry on its designs against England uncontroled.

Swayed by these considerations, nor less by the domestic distresses arising from the deranged state of their finances, they came to the resolution of desisting from the vast pretensions they had formed, and of contenting themselves with the grant of independence to the Colonists of North America; leaving to these the more arduous task of rendering, if it were possible, this scission of the British empire beneficial to them, and detrimental to Britain.

Whatever strictures may have been passed upon the terms agreed on between Great Britain and the other belligerent powers, there was a time when it was

was much doubted by the generality of people, both at home and abroad, whether peace could ever be purchased without making far greater sacrifices. Though the concessions made to the enemies of this country might perhaps have been less, they were by no means considered throughout Europe as disparaging to the British nation. It was thought, on the contrary, that the confederacy, by closing so readily with them, betrayed their apprehensions of what might prove the consequence of continuing hostilities, and from that motive determined to put a conclusion to them, upon the most favourable conditions they could procure.

Such, it was judged, were the reasons that induced them to enter into negotiations for peace, under the ostensible mediation of the Emperor of Germany, and the Empress of Russia.

In this manner was terminated the most important war that had been waged since the discovery of the new world. Both hemispheres seemed intimately conscious how deeply they were concerned in its issue. In Europe, at its very commencement it was fully perceived, that were Britain to lose the sovereignty over her Colonies, a new system of politics must necessarily arise, which would probably diffuse itself in process of time to every part of the globe.

In this great revolution, the European states possessed of dominions in America, beheld an immense portion of the earth, hitherto subject to their obedience, and subservient to their designs, animated by the successful example of a numerous proportion of its inhabitants, to throw off this yoke, and claim independence. An event of this kind, by confining them to the limits of their own country, would of course produce an universal alteration of their politics and interests, and oblige

oblige them to adopt new maxims of conduct both in their domestic and foreign concerns.

Those powers, on the other hand, who had no territories in America, still would greatly participate in the effects of this mighty change, through the connexions already subsisting, and the new correspondence that would ensue in consequence of it, between the European nations, in every branch of political and commercial intercourse.

Great Britain, in the mean while, though seemingly the most liable to be affected by this immense loss of territory, would probably, through the excellence of her constitution, and the wisdom of her government, but, above all, through the genius, the industry, and the persevering disposition of her people, retain the advantages and consequence that had so long resulted from them, and still maintain the figure she had made among the European powers.

Among those truths which it most concerns mankind to know, the British nation had conspicuously proved, that the splendor and felicity of a state does by no means depend on the extent of its territorial possessions, so much as on the improvement of those opportunities which are derived from nature and situation. These were benefits of which no vicissitudes of fortune could deprive this country; and it was upon the unvarying experience of their past efficacy, the confidence of its future prosperity was founded.

This truth had at no time been so powerfully elucidated, as during this terrible contest. Dispossessed of those Colonies, upon which, it had been repeatedly affirmed, her greatness principally depended; opposed by them with a force equal in strength and spirit to that of her most formidable enemies; assailed by these in every quarter; attacked by her ancient allies, and abandoned by all the

the world; in this tremendous situation, cut off from a variety of her former commercial resources, and relying wholly on herself, she still found means to confront the most powerful combination that ever was recorded in history.

She fought her foes by sea and land, wherever she expected to find them. The damages done to them far exceeded those she received. On the sea especially their trade was ruined, and their navies suffered losses incomparably superior to her own. The balance against them at the close of the war amounted to twenty-eight ships of the line, and thirty-seven frigates, carrying altogether near two thousand guns.

Having sustained this dreadful conflict with so much glory, and terminated it so honourably, without the least assistance or interference, against such an host of enemies, she came out of all her difficulties not only without the least blemish to her reputation, but with an increase of fame that raised her character to a higher degree of eminence than it had ever obtained before.

In the general war at the opening of this century, for the succession to the Crown of Spain, she was assisted by Holland in humbling Lewis the Fourteenth. During the war carried on under the administration of Lord Chatham, she had a potent ally in the King of Prussia; but in the present she stood alone and unsupported against three of the greatest powers in Europe, abetted by all the rest, at the same time that she was involved in a most violent and expensive quarrel with her American Colonies, now become through their union a formidable state.

From this convincing proof of her intrinsic strength, and of the immensity of her own resources, divested of all external aid, it was not doubted, that notwithstanding the heavy burthen of her public

public debts, she would, by a prudent management of her affairs, still continue to flourish as much as ever. As she had in the mid^t of her severest trials kept her national faith with all those who had entrusted her with their property, there was no ground to suspect she would be reduced to the necessity of forfeiting it when delivered from the perplexities that had compelled her to make such additions to the vast sums she already owed. Prodigious as this accumulation of loans for so many years must appear in the eyes of the world, there is not a state in Europe in whose funds individuals place their treasures with so much confidence as in those of Britain.

Such were the ideas and reasonings of the most intelligent politicians both in England and in foreign parts, at the period of the late pacification. It remains to be hoped, that the rulers of this nation will by their wisdom in the management of its future concerns, do full credit to the judgment and sagacity of those who have formed such auspicious expectations in its favour.

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* * * The gallantry, amiable character, and critical situation of Captain Asgill at the close of the war, having deservedly rendered him an object of national anxiety at that time, it was thought a tribute justly due to his merit, to insert his PORTRAIT in the present publication.



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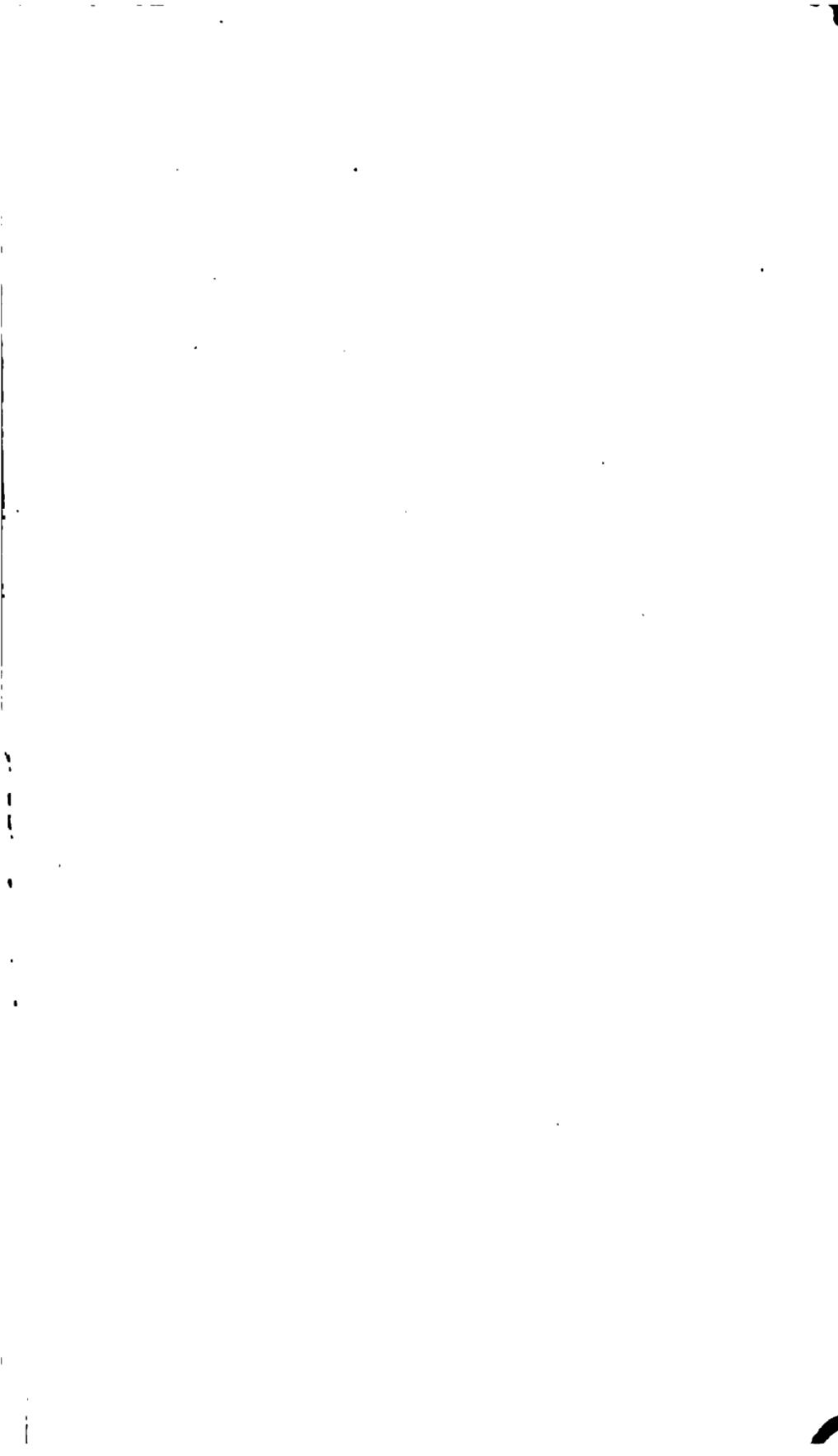
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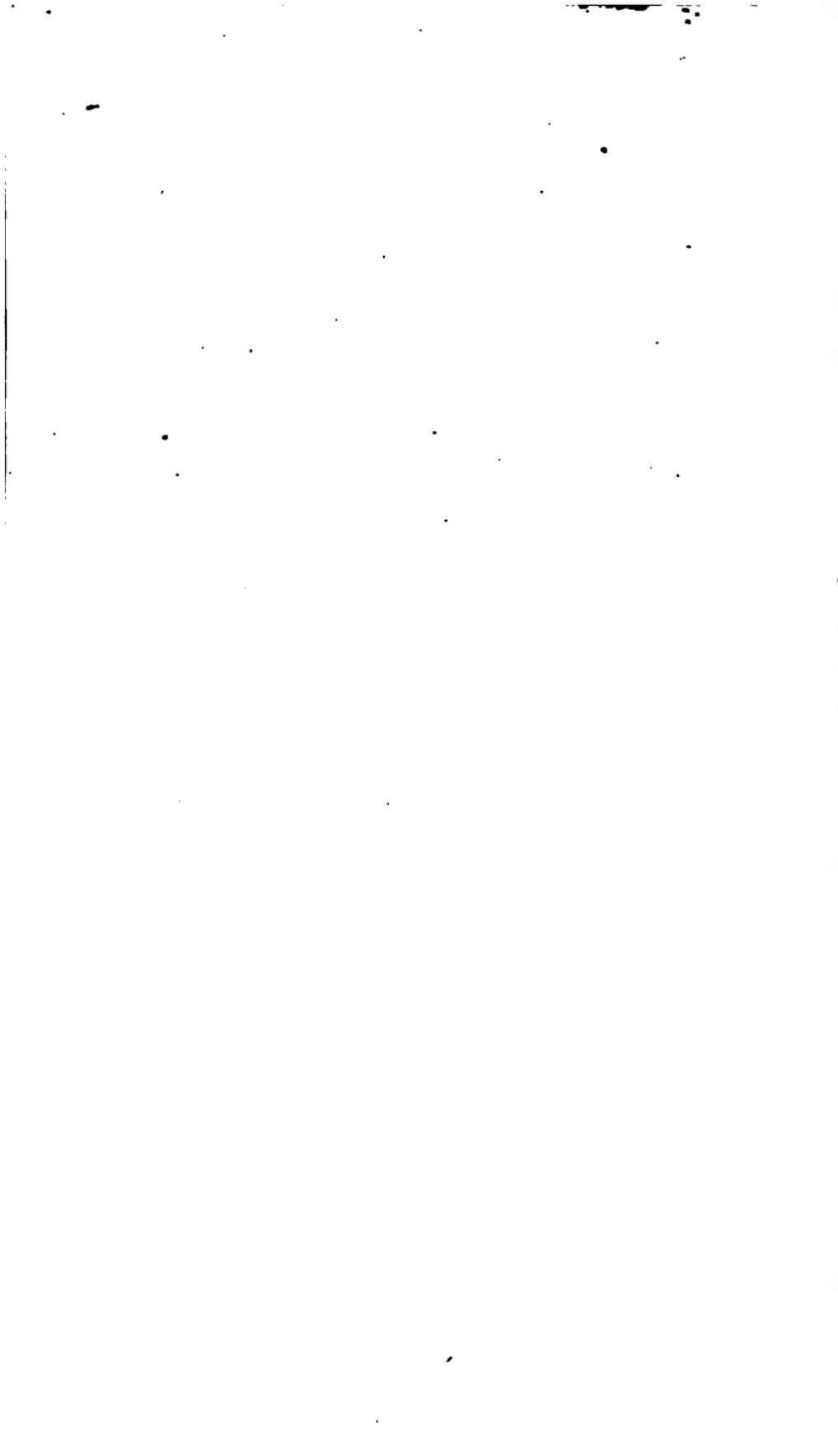
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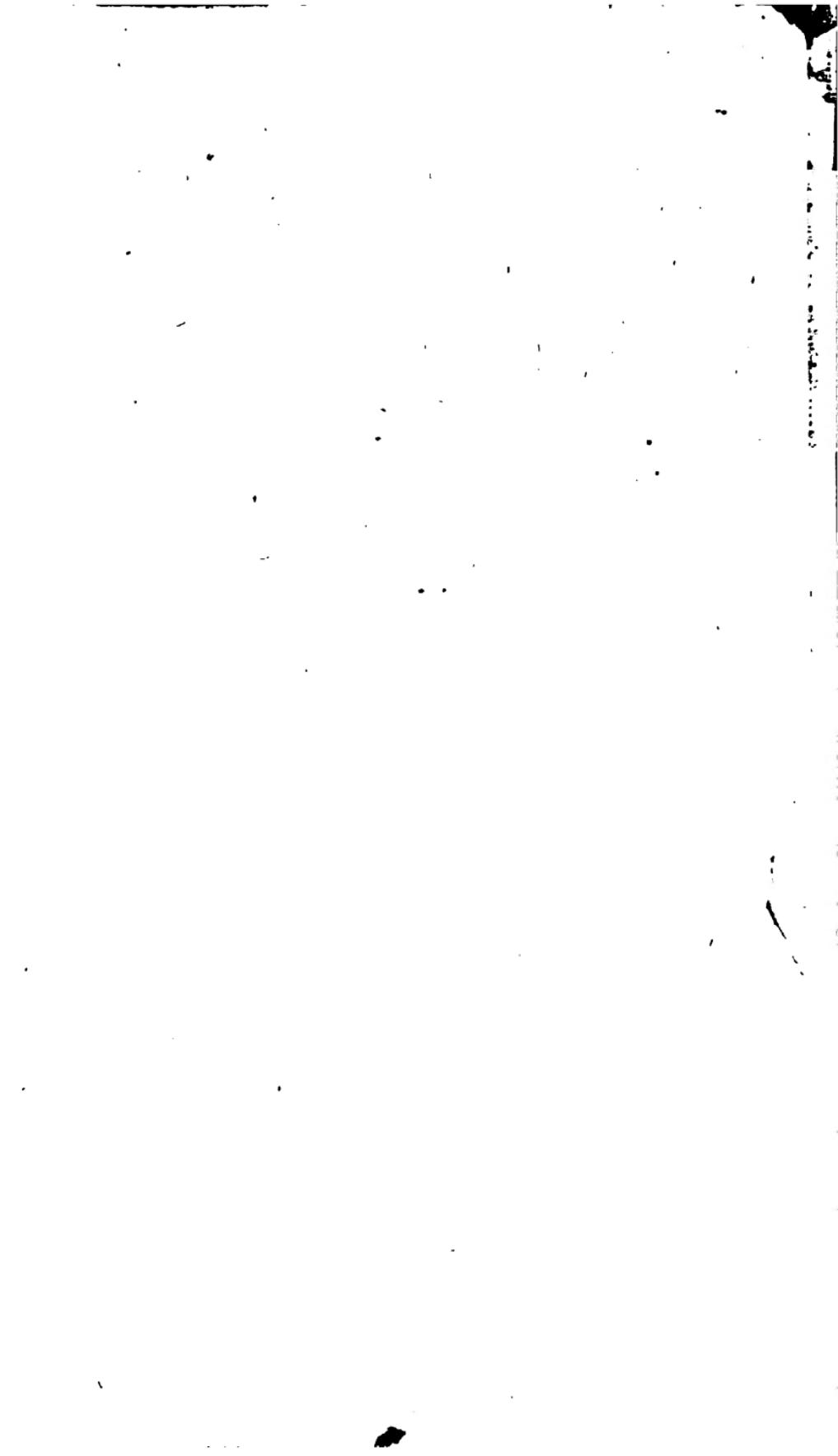
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